



CONSULTATION PROTOCOL FRAMEWORK

For the development of Effective Engagement
Practices for First Nation, Métis & Inuit
Communities (FNMI) in the BANAC Catchment area

November 2010

Determining appropriate protocols when working with FNMI people and their communities is critical to establishing positive and respectful relationships.

CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

Introduction

For the purpose of this document, there will be times that this will refer to “Aboriginal”. This term is meant to include First Nation, Métis & Inuit (FNMI).

The development of this protocol does not interfere or is not meant to substitute with the Governments’ defined “duty to consult” protocol as stated in Ontario’s, “Draft guidelines for Ministries on consultation with Aboriginal peoples related to Aboriginal Rights and Treaty Rights” draft June 2006. It states:

“Aboriginal communities in Ontario have identified, as a priority, the need for consultation processes that meet the Crown’s obligations to consult with Aboriginal peoples and which respect Aboriginal rights and treaty rights. Aboriginal rights and treaty rights are protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Crown’s duty to consult has its source in the honour of the Crown and the constitutional protection accorded Aboriginal rights and treaty rights under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In addition to developing consultation guidelines, which deal with consultation related to Aboriginal rights and treaty rights, the government is also working to develop effective engagement practices for involving Aboriginal peoples in other initiatives that directly affect Aboriginal communities.”

This process is being used to develop effective engagement practices that involve Aboriginal people in other non government initiatives that affect communities on a “partner to partner” relationship.

Rationale

The key to consultation is establishing mutually respectful relationships. The Consultation Protocol is intended to provide advice on how to seek support in developing Aboriginal perspectives, strategies for starting the consultation process and guidance in developing working relationships with Aboriginal communities.

Developing a consultation protocol that can guide schools and mainstream community organizations to enhance constructive engagement with the FNMI community has been identified as a priority.

Deb Woods, Coordinator for the Child, Youth & Family Coalition of Simcoe County indicates that:

“Mainstream individuals and organizations ‘don’t know what they don’t know’ and even if we’re well intentioned may not be aware of different approaches to family, to environment, to spirituality, in the FNMI community. Out of ignorance or possibly even

arrogance we may alienate FNMI individuals or organizations, undermining any chance for productive relationships.

This project is part of a request to BANAC made by mainstream service organizations, schools and planning tables who are concerned with ensuring positive working relationships with the First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities and organizations.

The Best Approach

There was consensus amongst the group that individual community protocols differentiated around the region and the best approach is to respect each community's autonomy and their unique structures and consult with them individually. The next stage of this process is to have each community identify the preferred approach for contact and communication purposes which will form part of the protocol.

We have provided some suggestions to follow for effective engagement based on feedback received from the community focus groups.

Guiding Principles for Building Mutually Respectful Relationships?

- RESPECT:** This is the first level of relationship. We need to look twice to see a side we haven't seen and sharing the knowledge of one another.
- WISDOM:** To know what to share and how much. Need to see how our input fits into the consultation. The recommendations need to belong and need to be responded to.
- COURAGE:** To be clear about the issues, name them and have the courage to bring them forward. **HONESTY:** Courage to be honest and talk about the issues and not get exaggerated or downplayed
- HUMILITY:** To engage is to effectively listen to someone always; this requires a quiet mind and a quiet mouth. Respect time. Time is needed to get groups together. Also respect the timelines of the communities and organizations and allow sufficient time for lines of communication to plan and implement and be on time.
- TRUTH:** We recognize that we have been given the 7 Grandfather Teachings in the Creation Story and that we honour the Creation. These teachings were given to help people see the way to a good life. Truth forms the basis of relationships and strength. We acknowledge and recognize the 4 Natural Laws of kindness, honesty, sharing and strength. We still operate from this since the beginning of time and it is acceptable and valued.
- LOVE:** Is about mutual acceptance. To accept another human being is to see the gift of the Creator. There is no room for tolerating discrimination or racism. Every human being is a gift of the Creator.