

PEGUIS COMMUNITY STORY  
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING

*Draft - July 2010*



**Prepared for:**  
The Peguis  
Trusts



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction to the Peguis Community Story.....</b>	<b>1.</b>
The Role of the Peguis Community Story in Developing a Comprehensive Community Plan .....	2.
How the Peguis Community Story was Carried Out .....	3.
The Organization of this Peguis Community Story .....	4.
<b>Children (Aged 0 to 12).....</b>	<b>5.</b>
1. What is life like now for children? .....	5.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	10.
3. What will things be like for children in a positive future? .....	10.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	12.
<b>Youth (Aged 13 To 15) .....</b>	<b>13.</b>
1. What is life like now for children? .....	14.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	16.
3. What will things be like for children in a positive future? .....	16.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	17.
<b>The Youth Speak.....</b>	<b>19.</b>
1. What is life like now for children and youth in Peguis?.....	20.
2. Lessons from the Past.....	22.
3. The Peguis Youth want to See .....	23.
<b>Women (Aged 26 to 55) .....</b>	<b>25.</b>
1. What is life like now for women? .....	26.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	27.
3. What will things be like for women in a positive future? .....	28.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	28.
<b>Men (Aged 26 to 55).....</b>	<b>30.</b>
1. What is life like now for men? .....	31.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	32.
3. What will things be like for men in a positive future? .....	32.

4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	33.
<b>Elders (Aged 55 plus)</b> .....	<b>34.</b>
1. What is life like now for elders? .....	35.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	36.
3. What will things be like for elders in a positive future? .....	36.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	37.
<b>Family Life</b> .....	<b>38.</b>
1. What is life like now for families? .....	39.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	40.
3. What will things be like for families in a positive future?.....	41.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	41.
<b>Governance and Political Life</b> .....	<b>43.</b>
1. What is political life in the community like now?.....	44.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	45.
3. What will things be like politically in a positive future? .....	46.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	46.
<b>Economic Life</b> .....	<b>48.</b>
1. What is economic life in the community like now? .....	49.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	51.
3. What will things be like economically in a positive future? .....	52.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	53.
<b>Social Life</b> .....	<b>55.</b>
1. What is social life in the community like now? .....	56.
2. What can we learn from the past? .....	60.
3. What will things be like socially in a positive future? .....	61.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	62.
<b>Cultural and Spiritual Life</b> .....	<b>63.</b>
1. What is the cultural and spiritual life in the community like now? .....	64.

2. What can we learn from the past? .....	65.
3. What will things be like culturally and spiritually in a positive future? .....	66.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	66.
<b>Infrastructure Development and Management .....</b>	<b>68.</b>
1. What is the current infrastructure in the community like? .....	69.
2. What can we learn from the past about infrastructure development and management in the community? .....	70.
3. What will the community's infrastructure be like in a positive future? .....	70.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	70.
<b>Land Selection and Natural Resource Management.....</b>	<b>72.</b>
1. What is the current situation with respect to the management of the community's lands? .....	73.
2. What can we learn from the past about land and natural resource management? ..	74.
3. How would we management land and natural resources in a positive future? .....	75.
4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?.....	75.





## INTRODUCTION TO THE PEGUIS COMMUNITY STORY

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Peguis is at a crossroads. We have some very important decisions to make about the direction we want to take. While we have always been a progressive community, much of what happened to us in the past was shaped by decisions that others made about us (such as the courts, the Province and, of course, the Government of Canada and its departments). Because of the recent settlement of our treaty land entitlement claim, we now have the opportunity to build the future that we want, as we see it and on our own terms.



Some of the important questions we need to answer to do that include the following.

- How can we use the significant financial resources available to us so that we can build our future wisely?
- How can we build a real legacy for our children and grandchildren while at the same time addressing some of the critical challenges we face today?
- What do we want our community to be like in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years or 20 years? For children, youth, women, men, elders and families; for our economy and our politics; for our social, cultural and spiritual life; for the management of our lands and resources; for education, health and house; and for our on- and off-reserve communities?

These questions are far too important and challenging to be left to a handful of people. Everyone needs to have a voice in shaping our future. This is why the Peguis Financial and Community Fund Trustees are facilitating a Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) process. The reason this type of planning is called “comprehensive” is because it covers pretty much everything: the individual wellbeing of all people of all ages, the health of families, community development, and even issues around Peguis’ sovereignty and our relationships with other jurisdictions.

In Comprehensive Community Planning every person in the community is invited to help make the plan. This plan is not just a document. It is a blueprint for action that needs to be implemented for us to know if it is taking us where we want to go. So, this type of planning really means a continuous cycle of consulting, action, reflecting on the

results of our action and learning how to do things more effectively. Once CCP starts, it doesn't stop. It needs to become a living part of our community life. We will need to keep on thinking, talking and acting together to guide our development process as it unfolds.

## **The Role of the Peguis Community Story in Developing a Comprehensive Community Plan**

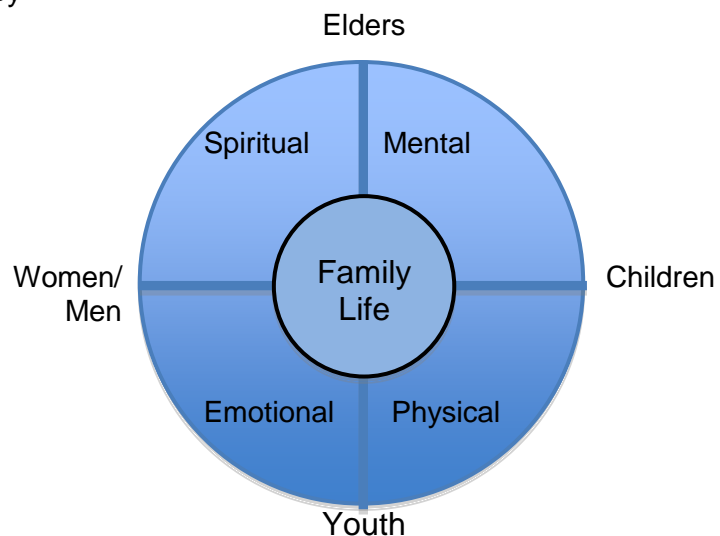
Our community story is the story of what happened to our people in the past and our understanding of how that past has shaped who and what we are today. It is also the story of what is happening to us today (the present), in the lives of our children and youth, in our family and community relations, in our social and cultural life, and in the political and economic life both on and off the Reserve. But, the story would be incomplete without also talking about the future we want. What will our community look like when things we achieve our goals? From the community story, we will be able to see clearly where we need to go and what we need to do to get where we want to go.

The story is now held in many pieces, like a puzzle. Different people hold different important pieces of the puzzle. The Community Story is a way for all of us to come together, to fit our pieces of the story into a larger whole that we can all share.

The Community Story process uses a medicine wheel framework to facilitate a highly interactive dialogue about:

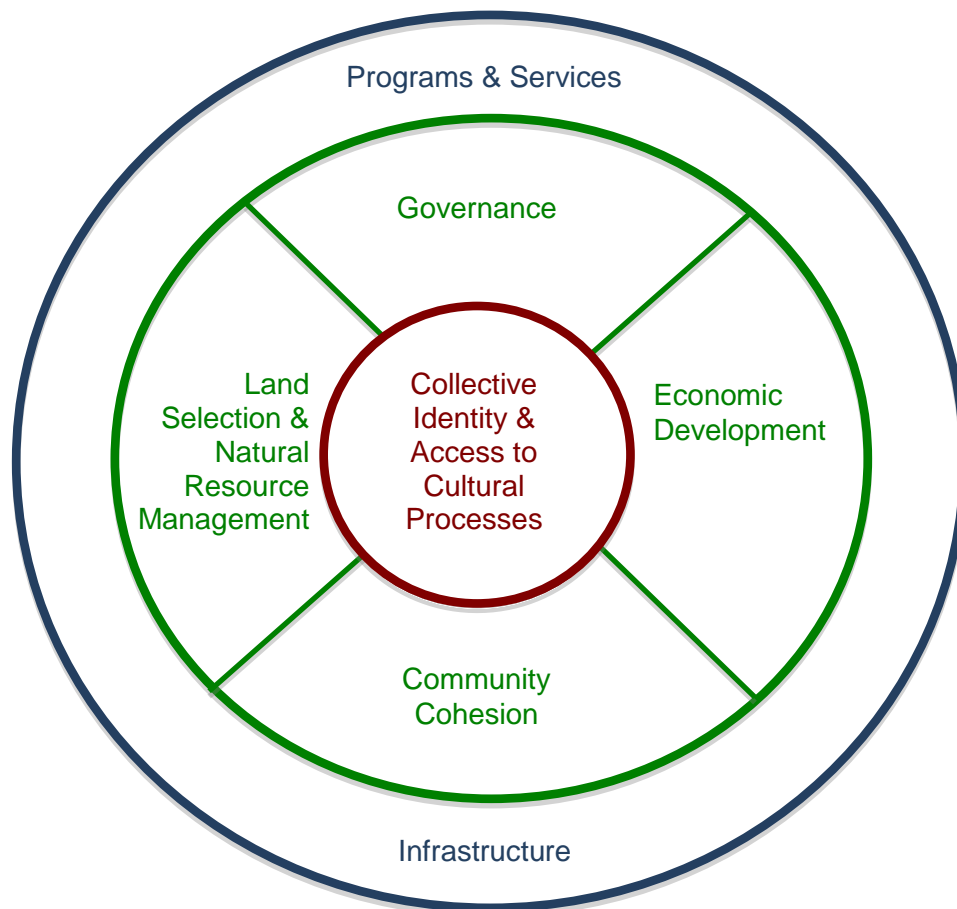
***Part One: The wellbeing of Peguis people***, using four main questions:

1. What is going on in the life of Peguis children, youth, women, men and elders? How healthy and strong are their families?
2. What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis individuals and families fulfill their potential for balanced, happy and prosperous lives?
3. What will things be like in a positive future for Peguis individuals and families?
4. What are the steps that can be taken to support the realization of this positive future?



**Part Two: Prosperity and Health for our Communities**, again using four main questions:

1. What is going on in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the Peguis First Nation? Are the community's programs, services and infrastructure meeting the needs of individuals and families? Is the community managing its natural resources in a way that contributes to present-day prosperity without compromising the wellbeing of future generations?
2. What can we learn from the past that can help the Peguis First Nation achieve greater wellbeing and prosperity?
3. What will things be like in a positive future for the Peguis First Nation in terms of how we function as a community and Nation?
4. What are the steps that can be taken to support the realization of this positive future?



### **How the Peguis Community Story was Carried Out**

The input for the Peguis Community Story was gathered between March and May 2010 through a series of meetings.

- ◆ A consultation process with all the students of the Peguis School in grades 6 to 12, held on March 24<sup>th</sup> – about 400 students participated, with the morning session involving grades 6 to 8, and the afternoon session involving students from grades 9 to 12. The input from the students is summarized in a section entitled “The Youth Speak” (see pages 19 to 24).
- ◆ An open community meeting held on March 25<sup>th</sup> – This lively day of discussion was attended by about 120 people, who worked in 12 groups, covering different topics during the morning and afternoon sessions. This input is summarized under the following headings in the pages that follow: 1) children, 2) youth, 3) women, 4) men, 5) elders, 6) family life, 7) economic life, 8) social life, 9) spiritual and cultural life, 10) political life, 11) land selection and management, and 12) infrastructure development.
- ◆ An open community meeting held in Winnipeg on the evening of May 13<sup>th</sup>, attended by 35 people and focusing on the following topics: 1) children and youth, 2) men and women, 3) elders, 4) family life, 5) Band programs and services, 6) political life and governance, 7) economic development, 8) land selection, natural resource management and infrastructure
- ◆ Another open community meeting was held in Selkirk on May 15<sup>th</sup>, attended by 25 people and using the same topics as the Winnipeg meeting.
- ◆ As well, meetings with community groups and individuals were held in both Winnipeg and Selkirk to make sure that everyone who wanted to could have input regardless of their work and personal schedule.

## **The Organization of this Peguis Community Story**

Each of the topic areas of the Peguis Community Story is included in the pages that follow:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| ◆ Children    | ◆ Political Live & Governance                  |
| ◆ Youth       | ◆ Social Life                                  |
| ◆ Women       | ◆ Economic Life                                |
| ◆ Men         | ◆ Culture                                      |
| ◆ Elders      | ◆ Infrastructure Development                   |
| ◆ Family Life | ◆ Land Selection & Natural Resource Management |

Each of these topics has a section about what life is like now, what we can learn from the past, what things will be like in a positive future, and what some of the steps are that can be taken to support the realization of this positive future.

## CHILDREN (AGES 0 TO 12)

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The following questions guided discussion about Peguis' children:

### **1. *What is life like now for children?***

- Are they healthy (mentally, emotionally, physically & spiritually)?
- Are they safe?
- Are they learning what they need to?
- What needs do they have that are not being met?
- What are their assets and strengths?
- Is life different for girls than it is for boys? If yes, how?

### **2. *How were things different for children in the past?***

- What was expected of children then?
- What can we learn from about the way that children were raised in the past?
- What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis children have a good life and grow up into adults who live well and make a contribution to their communities and to society in general?

### **3. *What will things be like for children in a positive future?***

- What would a truly healthy child be like (mentally, emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually)?
- What would it be like to be a child in a healthy family and community?
- What would have to change in order to achieve a healthy future for all children?
- Who has to be involved in making these changes?
- What parts of the needed changes can the Peguis community do on its own, with little or no help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are needed from outside the community to support the process of making these changes?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

### **4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to improve the future of our children:***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

What follows is a summary of the many insights and ideas shared by the participants in the Peguis Community Story process from the Peguis, Winnipeg and Selkirk meetings.

### **1. *What is life like now for children?***

It is clear that Peguis cares deeply about its children. They are deeply valued and loved and many efforts are being made to ensure that their basic needs are met and that they can flourish and develop their many gifts and talents. This caring is expressed through the



actions of parents, grandparents and other family members; through Band programs and services such as the school and through a host of community groups that sponsor recreational, social and cultural activities.

In spite of this, however, the participants of the Community Story expressed some very deep concerns about the current conditions under which too many children live and the impact of those conditions on the behaviours and attitudes of children. These concerns can be expressed in terms of the following topics.

### ***Daily Living Conditions***

Some children live in sub-standard and over-crowded housing. As a result, they do not get enough rest and they do not have the privacy they need to do their homework, to express themselves in creative activity or to simply have time to be alone and think. These children also do not always get enough to eat, and certainly have a diet that is not as healthy as it should be. They do not have the loving structure and boundaries to ensure that they attend school regularly, to build good habits for daily life and to protect their health in the present. These children may also not always have adequate and clean clothing or clothing that helps them feel socially included. It is likely that many of these children are also excluded from the recreational, social and cultural opportunities in the community, partly because of a lack of funds and transportation and partly because no adult is paying enough attention to them to help them to participate.

### ***Personal Safety***

Very distressing to the participants of the Community Story process is the fact that not all Peguis children are safe in their daily lives. Children and youth spoke passionately about the abuse that some children experience at the hands of the adults who should be protecting them. Physical and sexual abuse are not isolated events and some children also experience emotional abuse and neglect. This climate of violence carries over into the school setting, and the majority of children say that they are bullied by their peers at one time or another, either at school or in the community.

### ***Consistent Support from Loving, Role Model Adults***

The reasons why some children do not get the attention they need are described in the paragraphs above. But it is not just children who are living in poverty that do not get sufficient

*Mom and dad need to turn off the media, get off our butts and do stuff with our children. We need to talk to our kids, but even better, let them talk to us*

attention. Other children are left on their own too much because the adults in their lives are always busy, overextended by work or personal issues, or choosing to spend their time pursuing their own interests (which are sometimes unhealthy such as gambling or drinking) rather than spending time as a family. As a result, children spend a lot of time watching TV, playing computer games or on the Internet. Many parents also drop their children off for recreational activities or other programs in the community, but do not get involved themselves in supporting these activities or serving on the community volunteer groups that sponsor them. As a result, some children do not have enough structure and discipline in their lives. They come and go as they please, without any curfew.

Another important way for adults to help children maintain strong family relationships and to feel that they are cared for and valued is to make sure they have chores and responsibilities. This was easier in the past when the whole family cooperated to carry out tasks that were essential to the family's wellbeing (such as picking berries, roots or wild rice and cutting wood). Nevertheless children need to learn responsibility, so parents and other adults need to create opportunities for children to make a real contribution.

### ***Recreational, Social and Cultural Activities***

Everyone who participated in the Peguis Community Story agreed that there are not enough recreational, social and cultural activities for children, especially for younger children. There some strong sports programs (especially for hockey), but not all children are interested or skilled in this area. Many different types of social, recreational and cultural activities are needed and these programs need to be offered in the evenings

*In the future, we have to make sure that children are involved. No one can be left out.*

rather than during regular work hours when children are in school or parents are busy with jobs. It is important to stress the arts, such as music and theatre. A park with picnic facilities as well as hiking trails would also be a big asset because it would help children grow up being physically active. Activities like Air Cadets, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are also good. These are just some examples that were mentioned during the Community Story discussions.

It was recognized by the groups that discussed this topic that having such a broad range of activities, that there is something that matches the interests and abilities of every child will require strong involvement from parents and other caring adults. This is not something that should be the job of Band programs alone, although it is important to



have more recreational facilities, such as, of course, the multi-purpose area complex that everyone is talking about. Other facilities that were mentioned included a water park, a roller rink and a skateboard park.

A great deal of the work to run recreational, social and cultural programming has to be done by parents and other volunteers. Some community activities have had to close because of a lack of parental involvement. Parents and grandparents also need to choose to spend more time doing activities together, and especially activities that get people away from too much reliance on electronics for their entertainment. Even simple activities like playing hide and seek or tag in the yard are great because they get children active and outside.

For their part, children need to learn to value what the community provides for them by being more respectful of facilities and appreciative of the adults who donate their time and, often, financial resources as well.

### ***Strong Personal and Cultural Identity***

Children need to be taught those values and virtues (such as honesty, kindness, respect, courage and perseverance) that help safeguard a person through his or her life journey. These teachings are part of the cultural heritage of the Peguis First Nation and can be passed on to each generation through stories and other lessons, especially from the elders. Many children have lost a close bond with their grandparents and other elders, and as a result don't really know who they are. They are missing the sense of their spiritual and culture nature. As a result, many children are growing up without knowing how to be respectful, how to have empathy for others and how to work hard to achieve—all of which are important for their success in the present and for a good life in the future.

The school system could play a bigger role by having more Cree and Ojibway language programs, as well as other strategies for reinforcing cultural identity. The divisions in the community between those who identify with traditional spiritual and cultural practices and those that belong to a church community are harming the children. They should not feel like they are caught in the middle, and need the freedom to choose their own life path.

*What makes us strong as a people is the spiritual foundation. We need to pass this on to our children.*

*As parents and grandparents, we have to start by doing our responsibility. Then we will see the change in the kids.*



## ***Healthy Life Choices***

Childhood is the period when many life patterns and attitudes are established. Children need to learn about the positive benefits of living free from harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. This learning should happen in the family context, but should also be part of school and other community programs. There is a great deal of concern that children have easy access to alcohol and other drugs, and that they get into other kinds of trouble because they are not closely supervised by caring adults. It was also mentioned that children need to learn life skills such as making good decisions and coping with stress early. Keeping children on a safe life path means that the whole community takes responsibility for guiding the next generation. How this is done needs to be worked out so that parents don't end up being defensive.

Another aspect of healthy life choices are those behaviours around physical health. Many of our children are obese and have other health problems because they are eating too much junk food and aren't physically active. Adults need to look at their own behaviour (what they are modeling) and take responsibility for ensuring that children remain physically fit.

*Today, our biggest expectation is to go to school, eat French fries, go to the mall, eat more French fries, and then have a heart attack.*

## ***Getting a Good Education***

The Community Story participants worry that Peguis children are lagging behind their peers in other communities with respect to educational achievement. This is happening in part because school attendance is poor. Transportation is available for all children to get to school, so this should not be an obstacle. The school system needs to continually improve the quality of the education it offers (both in terms of subject matter and also in terms of character development) but, as well, parents need to work closely with the school to ensure children are getting a consistent message with respect to the importance of education and their responsibility to work hard and to comply with the behaviour standards of the school system. Also children are not being prepared to cope with the higher education system outside the community once they graduate from high school. They experience culture shock, and too many don't make it.

## ***Children in Care***

The Community Story participants spoke strongly about the fact that too many Peguis children have had to be apprehended by Child Protection Services. Since

children are such a valued and loved part of the community, some families must be in grave trouble if they are unable to perform that most basic function—caring adequately for their children. The need to ensure that foster families are better screened, trained and supervised was discussed as another related concern. Special attention needs to be paid to children in care, to ensure that they are able to participate in community social, cultural and recreational activities and are supported by caring community members. As well, parents with children in care need to know what their rights are in terms of contact with their children and what they need to do to restore their families.

## 2. What can we learn from the past?

A key strength of the way that children were raised in the past has to do with the way that children were included in the day-to-day life of the family. Family members did things together, and through watching their parents and other adults, children learned the skills they would need for their own lives. Adults also took the time to talk to their children. In this way, children learned about the inter-relationship of human beings with the rest of nature, about the skills of living off the land and about how to live with others according to the Seven Grandfather Teachings. As a result, children showed respect to adults and there was a strong bond between parents and children. Parents and other

*A good foundation has to start at home. With a good foundation, children will be able to do anything they want. They will be able to be a good employee, a good leaders, a good friend.*

members of the extended family did not simply talk about these teachings; they also set an example by the way they lived their own lives. Children were expected to make a contribution to the family's wellbeing. They had daily chores and they also helped with seasonal activities like picking berries. This lifestyle meant that all family members were more physically active. Community life was also more active. People visited more, sharing meals and playing

together. Family members took turns caring for the elders rather than sending them to a home where they are isolated.

## 3. What will things be like for children in a positive future?

### ***Family life***

The positive future will combine the best of the present with the best of the past. Children will grow up in the loving embrace of a strong family that includes not only their parents, but also grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and other members of the extended family. The family will spend quality time together doing the work that assures

that family has its basic needs met, enjoying healthy leisure time, and transmitting those teachings that provide a solid values foundation for a good life. In this context, children will gain a strong sense of personal and cultural identity and will feel that they are a valued part of the family, with an important role to play. They will respect their elders, and will also feel respected by other members of the family.

### **Community Life**

At the same time, children will receive a quality education in the community's school. This education will prepare them to be able to meet their daily living needs and to fulfill their career aspirations. They will also be able to participate safely in a wide range of community social, cultural and recreational activities. All children will have access to activities that match their special gifts and interests, and will be supported by community volunteers and role models to develop their full potential.

### **Basic Needs**

All children will have the necessities of life—a safe, clean and adequate shelter, nourishing food, clothing that matches the seasons and the resources to participate in community life. Those families that are struggling will receive the type of support that encourages them to strive for self-reliance and to take active responsibility for the wellbeing of their children.

### **Safety**

This encouraging, united and vibrant family and community life will help keep children safe and make positive life choices. Because the adults are united, bullying will be a rare rather than a common occurrence, and children will not be exposed to alcohol and drugs in their tender, growing up years.

### **Community Programming**

Effective community programs will support the efforts of families and of community volunteers and groups to ensure that all children have their basic needs met; that they are safe from any form of intimidation or abuse; that they are cared for and encouraged by loving, role model adults; that they have the opportunities to fully develop their gifts and talents to achieve their life goals; and that the community in which they live is united and proud of its cultural and spiritual heritage and current achievements.

*It's pretty tough being a parent today, but imagine what it's like for the kids. Sometimes they have so much responsibility, they don't know what to do. It all goes back to one thing—identity.*

#### 4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?

The participants in the Peguis Community Story process offered the following recommendations for the next steps in achieving this type of future for all the community's children.

1. The community needs to come together to resolve its differences for the sake of the children, who are currently suffering the consequences of political and religious divisions.
2. Families need to shift their life patterns to create more family time. It is the family that has primary responsibility for the wellbeing of children, and this needs to become a priority. Parents also need to actively support community recreational activities rather than simply seeing them as a way to keep the children busy while adults are pursuing their own interests.
3. Families and community activities need to find ways to keep elders more involved. They have an invaluable role in teaching children the values foundation for life.
4. The community needs to support the school to provide the very best preparation for future life (both academic and hands-on skills), including a strong cultural identity.
5. The community needs to develop and support a broad range of social, cultural and recreational activities that match the interests and gifts of all children and address all the barriers that may prevent some children from participating.
6. Community services and programs need to work together on addressing the critical issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of children, including poverty, substance abuse, bullying, physical and emotional neglect and abuse, and physical health issues such as obesity and high blood pressure.
7. A community-wide program that emphasizes the Seven Grandfather Teachings in all aspects of personal, family and community life is needed to provide a role model for all children of the attitudes and values that provide the foundation for life and that will help address the current behaviour problems exhibited by some children, such as the destruction of community property, bullying and experimentation with tobacco, alcohol and other harmful substances.



## YOUTH (AGES 13 TO 25)

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The following questions guided the discussion about Peguis' youth.

**1. *What is life like now for our youth?***

- How healthy are they: mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually?
- Are they safe?
- Are they learning what they need to learn?
- What problems/obstacles do youth face?
- Is it different for girls than it is for boys? If yes, how?
- What needs to youth have in order to be healthy or balanced? What are their assets and strengths?

**2. *What can we learn from the past about life for youth?***

- How were things different for youth in the past? What was expected of youth then?
- What can we learn from the way that youth were raised in the past?
- What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis youth have a good life and grow into adults who live well and make a contribution to their communities and to society in general

**3. *What will thing be like for youth in a positive future?***

- What would a truly healthy youth be like (mentally, emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually)?
- What would it be like to be a young person in a healthy family and community?
- What would have to change in order to achieve a healthy future for all youth?
- Who has to be involved in making these changes?
- What parts of the needed changes can the Peguis community do on its own, with little or no help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are needed from outside the community to support the process of making these changes?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

**4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to improve the future for today's youth and for the next generations of youth coming up?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

Many of the same issues that were described in the previous section about children continue to affect the lives of youth. The youth spoke about these conditions eloquently during the Community Story sessions held at the school. Their input and suggestions are included in the next section of this document, entitled *The Youth Speak*. The next couple of pages, therefore, are a brief summary of what the adults in Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg contributed to the discussion about the realities, needs and vision for Peguis youth.



## 1. What is life like now for youth?

### **Basic Needs**

Most youth have their basic needs met, but not everyone is fortunate to have adequate food, shelter and clothing. Because of the low level of employment in Peguis families, as well as the lack of adequate education and distressing rates of addictions (alcohol, other drugs and gambling), some youth go without. As well, because of a chronic and acute lack of housing on the reserve, many families live in very overcrowded conditions.

### **Safety**

Some youth are at risk of abuse and neglect because of substance abuse, violence and sexual abuse patterns in their families. The careless driving of adults in the community also put youth in danger (either when they are walking or if they are in the car with these drivers). The health of youth can be affected by housing that does not meet minimum standards (e.g. the prevalence of mold) and being exposed to second-hand smoke. Youth also put themselves in danger through their risky behaviour, such as driving while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, unprotected sexual behaviour, and smoking. Suicide claims the life of a distressing number of youth. Peer relationships characterized by bullying mean that many, many youth experience teasing, insults and violence.

### **Lifestyle Patterns**

The estimates of youth who are engaging in harmful behaviour is very high. For example, participants felt that up to 90% of Peguis youth use drugs and alcohol (including those who are underage). Related to this behaviour are high rates of drunk driving, break and enter crimes, car theft, and drug trafficking. Promiscuity is also high, and as a result youth are becoming parents long before they are ready and sexually

*Before we had gardens. Now we just run to the store. We have obesity and diabetes. We have to again be role models and put these back into the community.*

transmitted disease spread throughout the population. Many young people do not have a healthy diet. Fast food/junk food is part of the daily diet for many of them. Diabetes (including rising rates of juvenile diabetes) and eating disorders that result in obesity and bulimia are also prevalent. Youth are not getting exercise because they spend so much time in front of the TV and playing video games and they do not have any chores to do that require physical activity (as occurred in the past when most families had a

garden, kept animals and engaged in on-the-land food gathering through such traditional activities as hunting, trapping and berry picking.

### ***Voice in Community Decisions***

While many youth do feel valued and cared for by the community, they still largely do not feel that they have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. They say that adults do not believe that they have something valuable to offer. There are no regular mechanisms/processes for youth input (such as a junior Chief and Council or other type of youth council) and youth say that they don't know who to talk to about the things that concern them.

### ***Recreational Opportunities***

The same types of concerns as were raised under the topic of children were brought up related to youth. In general, it was felt that some children have satisfying recreational opportunities because they are gifted at, and interested in competitive sports. Many others do not have any positive outlet—either because they have barriers to participating (such as the lack of transportation, parental support or funds for equipment) or because no programs exist that match their interests and needs. Participants in the Community Story process remarked that the recreation centre is not open during the right hours and that workers don't adequately supervise youth. There are not enough community volunteers willing to coach and otherwise support youth people.

### ***Peer Relationships***

A primary concern related to peer relationships was the widespread nature of the bullying that most children and youth experience. Both boys and girls bully, and it goes on at the school as well as at other places in the community where young people meet each other. Bullying includes physical violence, as well as name calling, teasing and insulting each other. Another concern is that while young people make fun of each other, they also speak in negative ways about their parents, teachers, and other adults. This behaviour demonstrates a basic lack of respect. Harmful peer relationships also include peer pressure to use alcohol and other drugs and to participate in inappropriate sexual activity. Far too often, when young people spend time together, they are doing things that put them at risk, such as drinking and driving, damaging property, and stealing.

*Respect is the one word that sums up what we need for the future.*



## ***Opportunities to Gain Knowledge and Skills***

The Community Story participants worry that young people are not graduating with the skills that they need to succeed in their life goals and that they are behind their peers in the wider community with respect to basic academic skills. Some children are not getting the special help they need because the community does not have enough special needs educators. They also feel the school could do more to help children with the very significant issues discussed above (such as addictions, sexuality, and peer relationships). They would like to see students have more opportunities to study the arts, such as music and dance.

## **2. What can we learn from the past about life for youth?**

Community Story participants who discussed the realities and needs of youth spoke passionately about the past. Everyone had a farm with a few animals. People grew things and bartered with others to get what they needed. Every family member worked (e.g. did morning chores such as milking or cleaning manure). There was no such thing as welfare or family allowance. Children and youth had to walk to school and, in general, people rode horses or walked when they wanted to go somewhere. Because of all this physical activity, people were in good health. Families made up their own games or played soccer and kick the can. They swam in the river and made rafts. Young people hunted (rabbits and birds). People made hay, fished, gathered roots and picked berries and nuts, and trapped in the winter. Community events included dances, pie social and bees. The reserve was mostly dry (although some people snuck alcohol in). If someone needed help, everyone would pitch in.

These positive aspects of the past illustrate the importance of an active lifestyle and one that brings all age groups together in a broad range of activities. When children and youth spend time with their families and other community members in economic and social activities, many life skills are being learned, and the attitudes and values that promote healthy relationships and healthy lifestyle choices are inculcated into each new generation.

*In order to succeed in life, you need to believe in something. What makes us strong as a people is the spiritual foundation. We need to pass this on to our children.*

## **3. What will life be like for youth in a positive future?**

There is a very solid foundation upon which to build a positive future. Peguis youth are smart and capable. They are good at sport and have many skills with computers.



Some are showing a positive self-image. There is still work to be done, however, to create a community in which all Peguis youth will be proud to be a member of the Peguis First Nation.

In this future, all youth will grow up in the loving embrace of families that are able to meet their basic needs for shelter, food and clothing with dignity. Youth will experience interpersonal relationships that are based on respect and then carry those lessons into their own relationships with peers, parents, teachers and other community members. Youth will feel hope and a sense of purpose related to the contribution that they can make to their families and community in the present, but also for a future life of service through their professions as well as their volunteer lives. They will learn valuable leadership skills through participating in community decision-making processes. The community will be able to offer them a wide variety of economic opportunities, either as employees or as entrepreneurs.

The Peguis community will be an inclusive one that respects all spiritual practices. Young people will be able to freely choose their own path. The community will also develop ways to choose political leaders that do not divide individuals and families. A strong healing movement will help Peguis people move past the hurts of the past and move into a future that welcomes and honours everyone. Youth will be part of these efforts to rebuild a solid foundation of harmony and unity within the community.

*We will always be sitting here trying to find a way until we understand that there is no difference in basic beliefs between the churches and traditional practices.*

The example and support of healthy role models and this sense of vision and purpose will help inoculate Peguis youth against the lure of harmful life choices, including substance abuse, crime, interpersonal violence, inappropriate sexual relationships. A broad range of positive social, recreational and cultural activities will help them develop their many talents and interests. Their education program will prepare them for whatever their life goals are, and they will equal or excel the standard in the broader society.

#### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

For this positive future to come about, several steps can be taken in the months and years ahead.

- ❖ The Peguis community needs to find a way to come together to resolve its differences for the sake of the children and youth. Deep family, political and religious divisions are being reflected in the actions and attitudes of youth. It will not be possible to put an end to the patterns of interpersonal conflict among youth or between youth and adults until the adults lead by example.
- ❖ Elders need to regain a strong role in the community. As one of the Community Story participants said, “We took respect and values and put them on a shelf when we put our elders into a home. We have to get back there and create that relationship with our elders. They have to be in the schools; we have to visit them more often.” Rebuilding a strong relationship between elders and youth needs to be a priority for community programs as well as Peguis families.
- ❖ Community programs and services have an important role in addressing some of the critical issues facing youth that are described in the previous pages of this section. Currently, these programs are spread over a number of departments, and these efforts need to be consolidated as an integrated youth development program. As well, a careful analysis of what currently exists will need to be carried out and then compared to the full range of issues highlighted here. Clearly these priorities will involve more extensive social, recreational and cultural activities, but stronger initiatives to help youth with substance abuse and sexuality will also be required. In this regard, the school will have an important role, but so will other programs and services.
- ❖ Community programs and services will not be able to do all the work that is required, however. Families are essential to the wellbeing of youth, and some Peguis families will need help to achieve the prosperity and health they need to provide a safe and caring environment for youth, one that at the same time establishes the healthy boundaries and expectations for respectful behaviour.
- ❖ All the groups that discussed the wellbeing of youth stressed the importance of ensuring that the community as many, many different types of recreational opportunities. Examples that were cited include drama, music, and many types of sports. Improved infrastructure to support these activities include better baseball diamonds, a track, an arena and multi-purpose centre, a golf course, a swimming pool, a skateboard park, and greens spaces/parks. Clearly parents and other volunteers need to commit to supporting activities such as those listed here.
- ❖ Young people also need opportunities to earn money through part-time and summer jobs. As well, community infrastructure could make it easier for them and their families to get their basic needs met (e.g. a clothing store).
- ❖ Youth need structured opportunities to participate in community decision making. A Junior Chief and Council or another type of youth council could work, so would regular youth “town hall” meetings.
- ❖ The learning needs of every young person should be met through the education system. This includes the opportunity to become fluent in Cree and/or Ojibway.



## THE YOUTH SPEAK

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As part of the Peguis Community Story process, almost 400 students from grades 6 to 12 spent a day in two groups sharing their insights and suggestions. The courageous and forthright responses that these young people made to the following questions are summarized in this section of the report.

### ***What is life like now for children and youth in Peguis?***

1. Do all children and youth have their basic needs met (food, clothing, shelter)?
2. Are children and youth always safe? What are situations when they are not safe?
3. Are children and youth involved in any behaviour that is harmful to them (e.g. alcohol and drug abuse)? Which behaviours? Are any young people in trouble with the law?
4. Do children and youth have a voice in the decisions about what goes on in the community? How do they contribute to what goes on in the community?
5. Do children and young people feel valued and cared for in the community?
6. How would you describe the peer relationships among children and youth in the community (e.g. does bullying ever happen, is everyone respected)?
7. Are there enough different kinds of recreational activities so everyone can participate in something they enjoy? Can everyone who wants to participate in these activities? If not, why not?
8. Do children and youth have the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge they need to make good life decisions now and achieve their life goals in the future?
9. Do children and youth feel proud of their heritage and identity as Peguis people? Why or why not?

### ***What would things be like for children and youth in an ideal future?***

Regarding:

- Economic opportunities
- Education
- Community politics
- Culture and spirituality
- Recreation
- Health and wellness
- How people get along together
- Community services

### ***What are the most important next steps for creating that future?***

- For the next 2 years? For the next 5 years? For the next 10 years?
- What can children and youth do to build this future?
- What do adult community members need to do?
- What does leadership need to do?



## 1. What is life like now for children and youth in Peguis?

Youth find themselves in a unique situation in their development. They are no longer children who only have their enjoyment and own wellbeing to think about. They are not yet full adults who have a clear sense of purpose and direction. Although youth often share the same difficulties and issues that their families and communities do, they also have their own special concerns. Both adults and youth have provided a great deal of information about the realities of youth in Peguis today and how their lives could be improved.

### *Health and Wellness*

- a. Most youth do agree that they are getting their basic needs met by their families.
- b. Drugs and alcohol problems as well as gambling have impacted many young people when their families run out of money for basic needs.
- c. The health of some youth has been impacted by the poor quality of housing that they live in. Not only are the buildings sometimes in disrepair, but youth and children are often left with very little space that they can call “their own”.
- d. Youth are not aware of any programs within Peguis that provide needed help to parents on social assistance to help provide for their kids.
- e. Many youth are involved in harmful behaviors. 90-95% of Peguis youth use or have used drugs and/or alcohol in the past. The youth admit that this use “makes us make bad decisions” like driving while impaired, fighting, having unprotected sex and even committing break and enters and armed robbery. Youth feel that many parents are in denial about what their children are doing and how much trouble they are getting into. Youth say that they “see lots of adults doing bad things so they decide it is ok to do it too”.
- f. Youth are engaging in unprotected sex and putting themselves at risk for unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases

*Parents are in denial about their children being in trouble. Children are watching adult bad behaviour and then getting into it themselves.*

### *Safety and Security*

- a. Children and youth are often left alone for long periods of time while their parents and guardians are out working or even drinking and gambling. This lack of supervision gives youth the opportunity to engage in harmful behaviors like drugs and alcohol.
- b. Many youth expressed that a dangerous area in Peguis is the roads. Youth often do not have transportation and must walk on roads that are poorly lit and that are in poor condition. They feel that “lots of people are driving drunk and they don’t slow down or anything” and some people “don’t even have their license.”
- c. The high number of guns in Peguis worries some youth. They worry that “when people drink and they have guns, who knows what happens.” Provincial law allow people to carry guns openly in their vehicles and this just creates more opportunity for youth to come in contact with them in unsafe situations.

- d. The presence of gangs within Peguis puts many youth in dangerous situations. Youth shared that some kids have committed suicide because of problems with gangs.

### **Youth Relationships with Peers and Adults**

- a. Many youth (as much as 75%) are scared of bullying. "Bullying is a real problem and kids even get jumped," says one youth. There have been anti-bullying programs in school, but not in the community itself.
- b. There is "a lot of unhealthy boy/girl stuff" from abusive relationships to unprotected sex. The patterns of these relationships come from viewing the adults and how they interact with each other.
- c. There are many different cliques within the youth of Peguis. "If you don't belong to the right group then they won't talk to you." This creates feelings of alienation and even depression for youth. There are many Peguis youth who feel isolated, alone, depressed and unsupported.
- d. Youth put lots of peer pressure on each other to use alcohol and drugs and to engage in fighting and other harmful behaviors.
- e. Youth feel that most of their teachers and coaches do care, listen, and help them. They feel that "they are always there to help us every day." When adults are there for their kids, kids notice and it matters to them.
- f. Some parents and grandparents are a source of modeling and guiding for the youth of Peguis.

### **Recreational Activities**

- a. Almost universally, the youth of Peguis feel that they do not have enough recreational activities. The traditional sports of hockey in the winter and baseball in the summer are too limited to provide activities for the majority of youth. Especially absent are opportunities for girls to participate equally with the boys. A new multiplex arena is a huge priority for all young people.
- b. Because of a lack of facilities and equipment, "we can't all do things." There is a real lack of non-sporting activities like drama programs and music (both instrument and choir).
- c. Finances and lack of transportation are also limiting factors for many youth to participate in recreational activities. Lack of funds make traveling impossible for some youth and this keeps them from joining some teams. Even getting to practice is an obstacle for some.
- d. There are almost no activities for youth with disabilities or for those who do not want a purely competitive environment.

*All sports are competitive, and those that don't feel they are good enough are left out. If activities are co-ed, the girls get teased. The boys say they aren't good enough.*

### **Learning Opportunities**

- a. The school is providing some good learning opportunities for youth. Most youth feel that the teachers are a positive influence on the youth and are "doing a good job educating us." Youth can graduate from high school while staying in Peguis. If Peguis youth wish to pursue post secondary education, they must leave the community.

- b. While there are specific life skills programs within the school, youth feel that more should be offered (i.e. caring for babies/dolls program) and that there should be many more resources and options at the school.

### **Connection to Culture and Community**

- a. There is a general feeling of pride from youth towards their community and their culture. “We should be proud that we are the largest community in Manitoba and Canada. We were the first to sign a Treaty. We should feel proud.”

### **Participation in the Economy and Politics**

- a. Youth do not feel like they have a role to play within the political sphere. They feel this “because the adults are too busy to hear what they are asking and they don’t care.” Youth feel that until they have the ability to vote in elections, they will not have a voice. “Adults always say that we are the future but they keep making all the decisions about our future.” The youth feel that they have been made promises (like a new arena) and these promises have been ignored.
- b. Youth have a difficult time participating in the economy because there are not enough jobs in Peguis. It is very hard for them to make money unless they engage in illegal activities like drug dealing and robberies.

*This is the first time we have been asked what we think. We are only involved when there is a crisis.*

## **2. Lessons from the Past**

By taking a look at both the old traditions and the near past, we can gain important insights into today’s issues and problems and can gain a better understanding of some directions that can be taken to address issues and create a better life for youth in Peguis.

### **Health and Wellness**

- a. Getting everything that is needed for survival from the land helped youth get self-confidence, life-skills, respect for the environment and inner strength. It also helped them gain an appreciation for their elders and their parents and guardians.
- b. People were much healthier. If they wanted to travel they had to use horses or their own feet. There was hardly any junk or processed foods in the community. The constant need to hunt or gather food and tend to animals kept people active and busy. People had important jobs to do to ensure the survival of their family group. Everyone was important and knew that they were valued.
- c. While traditional healers did their best to care for sick or wounded community members, there was very limited access to western medicine and other forms of health care. People were forced to live in cramped and crowded houses and were not as careful about hygiene and cleanliness.
- d. Access and use of alcohol, drugs and even cigarettes was much lower and therefore its use was less prevalent.

### **Safety and Security**

- a. Peguis youth were not left out of community activities and were seldom left alone for long periods of time. Because of the lack of access of drugs and alcohol, youth were less likely to engage in aggressive risk taking and destructive behaviors.



### ***Youth Relationships with Peers and Adults***

- a. Youth grew to respect and value both their elders in the community and their family groups. Youth knew that they had much to learn from these people so that they could better survive in the future.
- b. Parents and grandparents were all actively involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren. The older generation provided role models for the younger generation.
- c. There was a general sense of respect coming from the younger generation towards the members of older generations.
- d. Although there were still conflicts and fights, youth were not afraid of bullying from their peers. There was a recognition that everyone had a role to play in the wellbeing of a community and all are valuable.

### ***Recreational Opportunities***

- a. Youth had less time for recreation when much of their day was spent engaged in doing the chores needed to ensure survival for their families. Very little time was spent in front of the TV or radio.
- b. Traditional recreational activities involved games, dancing and singing, and was often done at the community level. This helped build sense of community and pride in their culture. The available activities were inclusive.

### ***Learning Opportunities***

- a. Traditionally, learning was a process of the passing down knowledge from one generation to the next. This was done through stories, role modeling and simple direct teaching. Youth were able to learn everything that they needed to survive from their community.
- b. With the introduction of residential schools, youth were forced to leave their community and couldn't use their language. As a result, young people lost a part of their culture and identity.

### ***Connection to Culture and Community***

- a. Because there were no social programs provided by the government, people had to rely on the goodwill of their fellow community members to help in times of crises. This strengthened an already strong sense of community.
- b. Recreational activities revolved around traditional activities and songs and stories.
- c. A youth's identity revolved around their culture and community. It was what defined them.

*We should be proud that we are the largest community in Manitoba and Canada. We were the first to sign a treaty. We should feel proud.*

## **3. The Peguis Youth Want to See**

Youth were asked to share what they wanted to see in Peguis so that it was a healthy place for young people to be productive and develop into fine adults. They came up with a number of ideas that represent their ideal community.

- a. Improved housing for all members of the community free of mould and disrepair, and added space for people to call their own and to feel like they have a refuge and safe haven. All homes should have access to utilities and be healthy places to live in.
- b. A better transportation system is needed. Peguis roads need to be repaired and sidewalks must be built. Night lighting must be bright enough so that youth feel safe to travel on foot at night across the community. A transportation system that is available to ferry community members within Peguis when they cannot find other rides or when they are under the influence.
- c. A youth culture that shuns alcohol and drugs and is free of peer pressure and bullying. Youth will value healthy relationships with both adults and their peers, and will embrace and be proud of their culture and community.
- d. Youth would like to see better and more varied recreational opportunities. This will necessitate building some new facilities like a new arena/recreation centre, a swimming pool, fitness centre and well-lit baseball and playing fields. It will also require upgrading the equipment used for all of these activities. The youth would also like to see many more kinds of activities made available. For example, they would like to see greater emphasis on the arts (drama, music, and dance) and have opportunities to engage in non-sporting recreation. Girls and youth with disabilities will have access to many more activities than they do now.
- e. Better access to health care facilities (hospitals, pharmacies and clinics) and health care providers (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, chiropractors, traditional medicine practitioners) and better recruitment of top quality doctors.
- f. Youth would like to see better retail shopping opportunities in Peguis. This would save time and money traveling to Winnipeg to get clothing and other needed items. This will also provide youth with the chance to get jobs within the community and allow them some financial independence.
- g. Peguis youth will have a voice in the community decision-making processes and feel like Band and Council actually listen and act with the needs of youth in mind.
- h. Better communication between youth and community leaders, other adults, elders, their peers, and their families.
- i. School will provided a quality education, but will also provide lots of choice in courses and in life skill development. There will be access to post secondary education within the community so youth who want more education do not have to leave. Education will be valued by both youth and the community at large. Youth will have access to spoken language classes to help preserve their culture.
- j. The reserve will be clean and free of garbage and debris. People will have pride in their community and will make efforts to keep it a place that everyone can be proud of.
- k. Young people will grow up in families that are free of addictions, violence, and substance and other abuse. They will get guidance from the adults in their lives, and love and support from their families. Parents will become actively engaged in the youth recreational, social, healing and learning programs.

*We don't feel valued because there are lots of activities for adults, but nothing for the children until something tragic happens. Then they do something, but it doesn't last long. No one pays attention to what is going on with children and youth.*



## WOMEN (AGED 20 TO 55)

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The following four sets of questions guided the discussion of the groups discussing the theme of women.

### **1. What is life like now for women?**

- Are they healthy (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually),
- How does family life affect them? What about the community's social, economic, political and cultural life?
- What are the main issues/problems/challenges women are facing today in our communities?
- What are the main needs women have in order to be healthy and balanced? Are these needs being met? What are the obstacles? What are their strengths and assets?
- Which groups/categories of women are having the hardest time getting their needs met? Why?

### **2. How was it different for women in the past?**

- *What was life like for women in the past? What was expected of them?*
- *What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis women have a healthy and balanced life, to be able to develop their full potential, and to fulfill their professional, family and community roles?*

### **3. What would life for women be like in a positive future?**

- What would life be like for women in a healthy family and community? What would a healthy woman be like?
- What are the key things that would have to change in the ways things are now in order to achieve a healthy future for our women?
  - Personal level (i.e. the self of the woman)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e. the significant relationships the woman is involved in)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the agencies do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself)?
- Who has to be involved in making these changes?
- What parts of the changes needed can communities do on their own, with little or not help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are needed from outside the community to support the process of making these changes?
- *What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?*
- What sorts of learning are needed in order for these changes to occur? Who needs to learn?

### **4. What are the main goals to be achieved to heal, transform, and improve the lives and conditions of women?**

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?



What follows is a summary of the insights and ideas shared by the participants in the Peguis Community Story process from Peguis, Winnipeg and Selkirk. It was clear from what these individuals said, that they felt they really didn't have enough time to fully explore this topic, and that more detailed explorations of the realities, needs and assets of Peguis women need to be held.

## **1. What is life like now for women?**

The Community Story participants acknowledged that women are the heart of the community. They are responsible for caring for the people and for the land. They have always had a strong role in keeping families and communities together. There are a number of forces that are influencing the capacity of women to play that role in today's world, however.

*In the past, we had a Chief and Council, yes, but it was the women who were really in charge, making sure the family and community stayed together.*

### ***Family Breakdown***

There are now many single parent households in Peguis and the vast majority of them are headed by women. This is a difficult job, especially since many of these women do not have enough resources to comfortably and adequately meet the needs of their children.

### ***The Double (or Triple) Burden***

With more women working outside the home than ever, many women are carrying the bulk of the responsibility for both bringing in a salary and maintaining the household. In quite a number of families, it is the women who have the better education or whose skills better match existing employment opportunities in the community. This has sometimes created a type of imbalance in families. Women are also very active in volunteer work in their churches or other community groups, sometimes creating a life in which there is never enough time and exhaustion sets in with trying to meet these multiple demands.

### ***The Impact of the Media***

Today's media presents an impossible image of what women should be like. A part of this involves a narrow definition of how women should look in terms of their body shape as well as their clothing, make up and hair. Another aspect of how women are portrayed in the media has to do with the expectation that women should be a sort of

“super woman” who easily and confidently meets the demands of a challenging career while at the same time raising the perfect family and maintaining the perfect home, and still being sexy and beautiful! These pressures, which we are not always consciously aware of, can contribute to a sense among women of not quite “making the grade”.

### **Poverty**

The day-to-day reality for most women is far from this idealized picture. There are few real training and employment opportunities for women to realize their full potential and to earn enough money to meet basic needs, never mind achieve a life portrayed in the media. Adolescent girls are having children, and they lack the resources, both material and psychological, to cope with this major responsibility.

*Young people sometimes look for the love they are lacking by having children of their own.*

### **Women’s Wellness Issues**

It is clear that too many women are struggling with a poor physical and mental health. Common problems include obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure, as well as addictions (to substances as well as to gambling), depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Many suffer from low self-esteem. Some of these conditions are a legacy of the intergenerational impact of residential schooling, as well as the history of the Peguis First Nation’s split when many families moved from the Selkirk area to the site of the present-day Peguis community. This same history of trauma in the Peguis community has resulted in rates of domestic violence that are disturbing. This pattern also means that a high number of children are in care, having been placed with foster families both in Peguis and in other communities.

### **Current Program Initiatives**

Women do not have enough options for support. Current program initiatives are fragmented. As well, they are often not easily accessible for women who lack transportation. Also, working women cannot access programming that is offered only during the standard 9-to-5 working day.

## **2. What can we learn from the past?**

In the past, women and men worked equally hard, but each gender had its own roles. It was the woman’s role to maintain the home and care for the children. The family unit was balanced. People ate together and prayed together. *(Note: There still seems to*

*be some individuals who believe that women still rightly belong at home, and that working outside the home should only happen when no other option for financial support is available.)*

In more traditional times, the elderly women taught the next generation. There used to be women's groups that did practical work (like sewing projects), but at the same time provided mutual support and were an opportunity for young women to learn from the experience of the older ones.

As well, in the past, grandmothers would recognize the potential gifts of the younger generation and teach them special skills (such as midwifery, for example).

### **3. What will things be like for women in a positive future?**

In the positive future, women will experience true equality. This does not mean that they will not have their own roles. What it does mean is that whatever life path a woman chooses, she will be able to follow her dreams and achieve her potential. It also means that the role that women have as mothers—as the first educator of the next generation—will be properly honoured.

*The elders have to start taking the women into their arms. If we can change people just one at a time, soon our community will be much different.*

Women will live in an environment free from any form of abuse or discrimination. They will enjoy vibrant physical and mental health and will have access to a range of wellness and personal development options to assist them to build strong personal and cultural identities. The community will have a wide range of social, recreational and cultural programs for women to enjoy and benefit from. Strong bonds of mutual support and solidarity will connect women across the generations.

Women will be fully involved in shaping the social, political, economic and cultural life of the community. Their voices will be heard in decision-making processes, both through the participation of individual women and through processes that ensure that the needs and perspectives of women are always considered.

### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

Although the Community Story groups working on the theme of women did not get far enough in their discussion to develop comprehensive suggestions with respect to

next step, the following ideas can be put forward on the basis of the analysis of realities and needs that was done.

- An important first step in addressing the realities, concerns and contributions of women will be to carry out an assessment of community programming intended to meet the needs of women and to build a collaborative framework to ensure a comprehensive approach.
- Another step might include a cultural research process to explore more fully the traditional role of women in Peguis society and the implications for that role to present-day life.
- It will also be important to encourage the formation of a number of small women's groups that bring together girls, young women, and women in their middle years with women elders. These groups can organize around a variety of interests, but also have mutual support and intergenerational learning as an important goal.
- Special attention needs to be given to ensuring that women can pursue their life goals through further education and through support to gain productive employment or develop entrepreneurial interests.
- Protocols to keep women safe need to be developed between social agencies and law enforcement. Housing policies also need to be examined to ensure that victims of violence are not penalized.
- An essential step in assisting women to develop their full potential and to step into their roles in family and community life will be an emphasis on healing (related to trauma, addictions, grief and other core issues).



## MEN (AGED 26 TO 55)

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The following four sets of questions guided the discussion of the groups discussing the theme of men.

### **1. What is life like now for men?**

- Are they healthy (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually),
- How does family life affect them? What about the community's social, economic, political and cultural life?
- What are the main issues/problems/challenges men are facing today in our communities?
- What are the main needs men have in order to be healthy and balanced? Are these needs being met? What are the obstacles? What are their strengths and assets?
- Which groups/categories of men are having the hardest time getting their needs met? Why?

### **2. How was it different for men in the past?**

- *What was life like for men in the past? What was expected of them?*
- *What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis men have a healthy and balanced life, to be able to develop their full potential, and to fulfill their professional, family and community roles?*

### **3. What would life for men be like in a positive future?**

- What would life be like for men in a healthy family and community? What would a healthy man be like?
- What are the key things that would have to change in the ways things are now in order to achieve a healthy future for our men?
  - Personal level (i.e. the self of the man)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e. the significant relationships the man is involved in)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the agencies do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself)?
- Who has to be involved in making these changes?
- What parts of the changes needed can communities do on their own, with little or not help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are needed from outside the community to support the process of making these changes?
- *What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?*
- What sorts of learning are needed in order for these changes to occur? Who needs to learn?

### **4. What are the main goals to be achieved to heal, transform, and improve the lives and conditions of men?**

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?



*Peguis Community Story  
July 2010*

What follows is a summary of the insights and ideas shared by the participants in the Peguis Community Story process from Peguis, Winnipeg and Selkirk. It was clear from what these individuals said, that they felt they really didn't have enough time to fully explore this topic, and that more detailed explorations of the realities, needs and assets of Peguis men need to be held.

## **1. What is life like now for men?**

### ***Changing Roles***

Life for men has changed, and this change has been uncomfortable for many men. Family roles have changed. Women are now the primary breadwinners in some families and the avenues that men had to provide for their families are now not as viable as they once were. Too often, the consequence of these changes has been that men have lost their sense of pride and purpose in life, as well as their motivation.

### ***Lack of Training and Economic Opportunities***

The Community Story participants felt that there are very few jobs for men in the community, and that they do not have enough opportunities to upgrade their education and skills in order to be more competitive in the workplace. As well, there do not seem to be many opportunities for men to be entrepreneurial in developing new sectors of the economy in Peguis. Off-reserve men tend to have more education and training, and some men leave Peguis for this reason.

### ***Family Responsibilities***

One of the consequences of men feeling like they have lost their capacity to provide for their families is that some of them are not taking responsibility for their children. Men are becoming fathers at a younger age, and they do not always have the capacity to step into that role effectively. The lack of housing in the community also makes it very difficult for young families.

*Men need roots and a sense of belonging. How can we get somewhere if we don't know where we came from?*

### ***Wellness Issues***

In large part because of the circumstances described above, many men are experiencing a variety of wellness issues. Certainly a loss of self-esteem and a feeling of self-worth are serious in themselves. Men also report depression and a lack of a sense of purpose and drive. It becomes hard to keep trying when you feel that there are so few



opportunities and supports. Certainly, like women, men have been affected by the impact of the residential schools and other aspects of Peguis' colonial history. Addictions and violence are an unfortunate by-product of this history, and there have not been adequate programmes to address these debilitating issues.

## **2. What can we learn from the past?**

In the past men were the breadwinners/providers. They also took responsibility for many of the decisions affecting the wellbeing of the family. Men hunted and trapped. As well, they also farmed, raising animals and grew food for these animals and for the family. Most men were also handy with basic skills such as carpentry. They understood that part of their responsibility was to protect their family.

Fulfilling these roles meant that men worked hard. They were used to getting up early and tackling the many tasks that each day brought. It could be said that their motto was, "Why put off for tomorrow what you can get done today."

*There was  
no laziness  
or waiting  
around for  
handouts.*

## **3. What will things be like for men in a positive future?**

In a positive future, men will have regained their sense of pride, their sense of importance, and the knowledge that they play an important role in their families as providers, protectors and leaders. At the same time, men will feel comfortable with changing roles in their families, with women assuming more assertive roles with respect to employment outside the home, sharing decision making about issues affecting the family and playing strong roles in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the community. Men will share parenting responsibilities more equitably with their partners and gain the skills and confidence to communicate more effectively with the family members. Young men receive better preparation for marriage and mentorship from more experienced role models as they step into this important role.

The future will provide many opportunities for men to gain the education and training that will allow them to pursue their life aspirations. Life-long learning will be the norm. The community will also have a vibrant economy, which will translate into many job and entrepreneurial opportunities for men. Young men will not see a life of collecting welfare as a responsible choice.

Men will play a strong role in their communities; for example, as volunteers supporting many types of social, recreational and cultural activities for children and youth; in leadership roles in their faith communities, on community boards and committees. The community, in turn, will acknowledge and honour the important contribution that men make.

Men will enjoy abundant physical and mental health. Community programs will provide ample healing and personal development opportunities and men will have the knowledge, skills and commitment to make responsible life choices with respect to physical activity, healthy eating, and the use of substances.

#### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

The suggestions of the Community Story participants for addressing the realities and needs of Peguis men were a direct extension of their description of a desirable future.

- A clear priority is restoring the capacity of men to be able to support and care for their families. This means the development of effective programs to assist men to gain the drive, self-confidence, skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to gain and maintain employment or other types of livelihood activities.
- For some men, this will mean a concentrated focus on basic wellness—dealing with addictions, anger, depression and frustration.
- Some men also need to gain parenting and life skills, especially focused on effective communication and creating a climate in which every family member is respected.
- For these things to happen, men can benefit from a strong connection to their identity as members of the Peguis First Nation, with its cultural traditions and practices that can guide and sustain life. This could mean a cultural research and revival process.
- Men should be encouraged to contribute their many skills to the improvement of the community through volunteer work and stepping forward into a variety of leadership positions.
- All the community programs that have a mandate to address any of the issues related to the wellbeing of men need to come together to develop an integrated framework for action and to fill the service gaps that exist.



## ELDERS (AGED 55 PLUS)

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The following four sets of questions guided the discussion of the groups discussing the theme of elders.

### **1. What is life like now for elders?**

- Are they healthy (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually),
- What are the main issues/problems/challenges elders are facing today in our communities?
- What are the main needs elders have in order to be healthy and balanced? Are these needs being met? What are the obstacles? What are their strengths and assets?

### **2. How was it different for elders in the past?**

- *What was life like for elders in the past? How have things changed for today's elders?*
- *What can we learn from the past that can help Peguis elders have a healthy and balanced life, to be able to develop their full potential, and to fulfill their family and community roles?*

### **3. What would life for elders be like in a positive future?**

- What would a truly healthy elder person be like (mentally, emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually)?
- What would life be like for elders in a healthy family and community?
- What would have to change in the ways things are now in order to achieve a healthy future for our elders?
  - Personal level (i.e. the self of the elder)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e. the significant relationships the elder is involved in)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the agencies do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself)?
- Who has to be involved in making these changes?
- What parts of the changes needed can communities do on their own, with little or not help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are needed from outside the community to support the process of making these changes?
- What sorts of learning are needed in order for these changes to occur? Who needs to learn?

### **4. What are the main goals to be achieved to heal, transform, and improve the lives and conditions of elders?**

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

What follows is a summary of the insights and ideas shared by the participants in the Peguis Community Story process from Peguis, Winnipeg and Selkirk.



## 1. What is life like now for elders?

Community Story participants talked about the following themes that characterize the life of Peguis seniors.

### ***Loneliness and Isolation***

A common theme during the discussions about the life of elders in today's world is their isolation. A way of life that used to involve families doing lots of things together, and extended family members all living in proximity have changed. Grown children are so busy with everyday life—jobs, family and community responsibilities. Grandchildren are also busy with school, their video games or recreational activities. Elders who live in a care facility or on their own are even more isolated than those that live with family members. Elders are also isolated from the community because of poverty, the lack of transportation, or simply not being included in the plans for community life.

### ***An Under-used Source of Knowledge***

The Community Story participants spoke about the elders as a critical source of important information, including cultural knowledge and language, that is in danger of

*Our elders are a symbol of the hardships that we had to endure. They are the original path makers.*

being lost. They felt strongly that one of the reasons that so many youth are struggling is that they are not connected with the elders, and do not therefore benefit from their teachings and love. It is important that we take the time to document their stories, recipes and other pieces of knowledge before it is too late. As one individual remarked, “Elders are looked after at Christmas time, but then they are put away

again.”

### ***Lack of Adequate Services and Facilities***

The community of Peguis needs a seniors centre that can serve as a bustling place with a wide range of social, recreational and cultural activities for seniors, but also which also bring the rest of the community together with seniors. The community also needs a lot more seniors housing, at all stages from independent living to extended care. This is especially important, since there are many Peguis people who are in the age group that will soon be ready to retire, and existing facilities will not be able to accommodate an increase in numbers. Some of the housing that seniors currently occupy do not meet basic standards for comfort, safety and health. Seniors also

complain of boredom. They need more than bingo, they say, to keep them active and learning.

### ***Wellness and Personal Development Opportunities***

Many of the elders attended residential schools, and for some of them, this was a traumatic experience that is still leaving an impact on their lives. Some have also become bitter and frustrated with other aspects of their past and present lives. This has made it difficult for some elders be positive role models. Just like other sectors of the population, some elders suffer from addictions and other critical wellness issues. The physical health of elders is also a big concern, with diabetes, heart conditions, blood pressure problems and cancers as some of the worrisome problems.

## **2. What can we learn from the past?**

Traditionally, every person in the community was important. No one was pushed to the sidelines as we sometimes do with elders now. At that time, families did things together, and children and youth naturally had a strong relationship with their grandparents and other elders. Elders were well respected because of the way that they worked so hard to provide and care for their families, reached out to others in times of need and contributed to the community. Elders took their role as educators of the next generation seriously by sharing stories with important life lessons and by demonstrating survival and daily-living skills until they were mastered by their children and grandchildren. Elders were also always there as a source of advice when people came up against life challenges or came into conflict with each other.

## **3. What will things be like for elders in a positive future?**

In an ideal future, elders will be in the centre of the community, not a forgotten group on the side of life. A drop-in and activity centre will have exciting programs and activities that will keep seniors active, but will also involve many other parts of the community, including children and youth. An efficient transportation system will make sure that seniors can participate in whatever is happening in the community. Elders will again play an advisory role for every initiative on which the community embarks, whether political, social, economic or cultural. Seniors will have the facilities they need to live comfortably. A strong wellness program will focus on the physical and mental health needs of seniors. Their health issues will be

*Some elders  
may tend to sit  
back. They need  
others to come  
to them and ask  
for help.*

handled with compassion and competence, while at the same time an effective prevention program will reduce illness by making sure that elders have nutritious food and are encouraged to be physically active. The community will have kept traditional knowledge alive by recording the teachings of the elders in books and electronic media.

#### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

The participants of the Community Story process that consulted on the realities, needs and strengths of the elders outlined the following steps that could be undertaken in the years ahead.

##### ***1- to 2-Year Plan***

The priority during this period is on creating many opportunities and mechanisms for really listening to the elders. One suggestion was to build a big building shaped like a teepee that could accommodate youth-elder gatherings, which would be held once or more a month. Transportation would be arranged to ensure that all elders and youth can participate easily.

Another step that could be taken right away is the creation of an Elders Council or Board (which has a balance of male and female members). This group could be called on to provide guidance whenever a significant step is being taken by the Peguis Nation. It could also serve as a dispute resolution body for interpersonal or community conflicts.

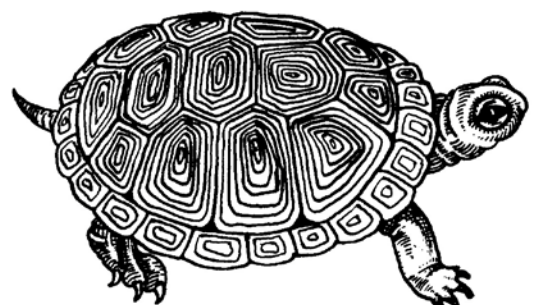
Third, a seniors wellness program would focus on healing for residential school survivors, as well as improving the physical and mental health of elders through an effective health promotion and disease prevention program. As well, all elders would receive excellent care for existing health conditions.

##### ***5-Year Plan***

During the five-year plan, the focus would be on building new housing for elders, with a full range of options from independent to assisted living. As well, the seniors centre would be built, ideally close to the housing units.

##### ***10-Year Plan***

The 10-year plan would anticipate the needs of a growing elderly population as those that are now in their mid lives prepare to retire. An continuing



emphasis would be on creating many opportunities for youth to be able to learn from the elders.

## FAMILY LIFE

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In discussing the Peguis family life, the Community Story participants were guided by the following four sets of questions.

### 1. *What is life like now for families?*

- What is really happening to family life in our communities? Is it healthy and strong?
- What is happening in the key relationships that make up strong, healthy families such as:
  - husband and wife?
  - parents and children?
  - grandparents and children?
  - between children (brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.)?
  - extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces)?
- What are the basic minimum needs that have to be met for a family to be healthy?
- Are our families getting their needs met? What are the strengths and assets families bring to their own wellbeing and to community life. Explain.

### 2. *How was it different for families in the past?*

- What has changed from the way families used to be in the past?
- What can we learn from the past?

### 3. *What would family life be like in a desired future?*

- What would a truly healthy family be like (mental, emotional, spiritual, physical)?
- What are the key things that will have to change in order to achieve a healthy family life for our communities:
  - Personal level (on the level of individual members of the family)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e., the significant relationships within the family and among families)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the agencies do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself)?
- What other development issues are connected to building healthy families (political, economic, social, and cultural/spiritual). Be specific.
- What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?
- What part of the changes needed can families and communities do on their own, with little or no help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are required from outside the community to support the process of making the changes that are needed?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

### 4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to heal and develop our families so they are healthy and strong?*

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?





- In the next 10 years?

In reflecting on the current realities, needs and strengths of Peguis families, as well as what it will take to support these families to become as strong and healthy as possible, the Community Story participants recognized that families are the foundation institution of any community. If families are strong and healthy, the community will also prosper. If families are dysfunctional, disunited and unhealthy, there is no way that a community can be healthy. Families are made up of many relationships. The relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, children and grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunties, nephews, nieces—all of them contribute to the web of relationships that make up our immediate and extended families. All of them will be healthy when the family is healthy.

## 1. What is life like now for Peguis families?

The following themes came up during the discussions about family life held in Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg.

### **Disunity**

Community Story participants felt that there is less unity among Peguis families than there was in the past. In earlier days, families would naturally help each other and work together on community projects. Now it seems that people keep to themselves. They are so focused on their own needs and activities and expect to be paid for doing community work. There is also a lot of unspoken competition between families. Relationships between the members of families are also not as close as they used to be. As one participant said, “Life is fragmented. We are not as close as we used to be.”

*It takes a community to raise a child. This was so in the past, but now we are not as close knit. We have drifted apart. We need to work at bringing back the unity of family and community.*

### **Changing Roles within the Family**

As mentioned in earlier section about life for men and women, family roles have changed in the past years. In more traditional times, men focused more on earning the family's livelihood and women were responsible for the care and maintenance of the children and household. Now many women work outside the family. Employment for men is scarce in Peguis, so some men work off reserve and others feel demoralized by their inability to provide. In other families both parents work, but this sometimes puts added stress on women, who still maintain primary responsibility for the housework and childcare. Often, families do not share time after work and school. Everyone grabs

something to eat and then goes out for his or her own activities in the community with peers. The evening family meal when everyone shared what happened during the day and when family issues could be discussed is largely a thing of the past.

### ***Poverty and Welfare Dependency***

It is estimated that up to 70% of Peguis families rely on social assistance payments to meet their basic needs. Dependency on Band programs and services has replaced a strong sense of self-reliance and mutual support. A drastic shortage of housing, high levels of unemployment and dependency thinking mean that many families are living in circumstances in which they cannot easily meet their basic needs for shelter, nutritious food and clothing. Poverty also excludes many families from participation in the life of their community and in society at large.

### ***Social Issues***

Along with welfare dependency has come a sharp rise in social issues such as addictions (substance and gambling), various forms of abuse (including incest and other types of sexual abuse and domestic violence), suicide and crimes (such as driving under the influence or break and enter). Many individuals are still suffering from the intergenerational impact of historical trauma.

*We were very sad to hear what the children and youth said about some of them being afraid to go home. It is incredible that children do not feel safe in school, the community and at home.*

## **2. What can we learn from the past?**

In the past, every family member knew what his or her roles and responsibilities were. Men and women had more clearly defined roles. Men worked outside the home and women maintained the household and cared for the children. The father was considered the head of the household. Children and youth learned daily living and survival skills by working side-by-side with their parents, grandparents and other family members. Grandparents had a special responsibility for caring for the children. They understood their role to impart to their grandchildren the values and skills that would enable them to grow up into strong, healthy men and women. Everyone knew who they were and who they were related to.

At that time, families worked together more closely. For example, at harvest time, we all worked together and would share food after a long day of stooking. Families depended on each other rather than on government services. As well, families helped

each other. At harvest time, families would take turns helping each other get the crops in. Building bees would make it possible to get a house or barn up in a short period of time. Families practiced the traditional values of the Seven Grandfather Teachings and had ways to mark important transition times such as marriages, the birth of children, the coming of age of youth, elderhood, etc.

### **3. What will things be like for families in a positive future?**

In a positive future families and the community as a whole will be more united. This unity will be built on a comprehensive understanding of Peguis traditions and history. All community members will know who they are, and to whom they are related. Families will be strong socially, economically and culturally. All families will have the capacity and will to work hard, and there will be opportunities for all to find suitable employment. Every family member will feel cared for and respected and will, in turn, know how to respect others and fulfill their responsibilities as grandparents, mothers or fathers, aunts and uncles, children, siblings, cousins, etc. All families will be able to enjoy the spiritual path they have chosen and to share with others the universal foundation of all spiritual traditions.

Families will spend quality time together, as a family unit and with other families in community gatherings, feasts and fun events. Families will also spend more time just visiting each other. All ages will be included in these types of gatherings, and one of the benefits will be that children and grandchildren will develop a strong sense of their personal, family and cultural identity. Families will enjoy recreational time together rather than having people spend most of their leisure time in age-segregated activities. Both tears and joy will bring people together. When families experience hardship, other families will be there to support them. Significant family events such as weddings, the birth of children, the coming of age of young people and anniversaries will be a time of celebration for extended families and the whole community.

### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

The Community Story participants had several suggestions about how to more fully realize this positive future. These comments are organized according to five categories as follow.

*If only 2% of our people are ready to make a change, we can turn things around.*

### ***Cultural Research Process***

There was strong consensus that a cultural recovery process is one of the essential keys to building strong families. All ages need to understand the history of the Nation, how that history has shaped current relationships (within and among families), and the strengths and assets the Nation has for moving forward.

### ***Family and Community Reconciliation Process***

Another step on which there was strong agreement was the need for a healing and reconciliation process that would assist families, and the individuals in them, to move forward from the hurts of the past with a new sense of peace and hope.

### ***Family Development Programs***

Many families have lost important skills that are essential to family harmony and prosperity. These skills include interpersonal communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, financial management, healthy living through eating right and exercising, parenting, and maintaining a safe, comfortable and attractive home. These families need systematic encouragement, training and guidance.

### ***Meeting Basic Needs and Livelihood Development***

A systematic program designed to move vulnerable families from poverty and welfare dependency to greater self-reliance and prosperity is needed. This will require a coordinated approach that involves many programs and services, which include Health, Social Services, Education, and Economic Development.

### ***Community Building Events***

A broad range of activities that are attractive to people of all ages are needed in the community so that families will have lots of incentive to spend quality time together: socials, cultural events, games nights, arts performances, etc.



## GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL LIFE

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The small groups that worked on the governance and political life of the community used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

### **1. *What is political life in the community like now?***

- What is the current political reality we live with inside our communities, between ourselves and outsiders, in the world, or on and off reserve?
- How is the current political reality affecting the human and community development of our people?
- What is the quality of ordinary people's participation in shaping what happens in the community?
  - Who has the power inside our communities?
  - Who decides about money and important things?
  - Does everyone have a meaningful voice in shaping decisions that affect them? Who does not?
  - To what extent do the people being "helped" or "served" by programs get asked to help design, implement and evaluate those programs?
- To what extent do people control the processes of development in their own communities?
- Are their tensions between the culture of the community and the culture of government systems and programs?

### **2. *How was our political system different in the past?***

- What can we learn from the way our political systems were organized in the past that can help us move forward into a prosperous and healthy future?

### **3. *What would political life be like in a positive future?***

- What would a truly healthy community be like politically? (Please list its features.) What is the difference for individuals living on or off the reserve?
- What will have to change in order to bring about this politically healthy future?
  - Personal level (i.e., personal growth)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e., the quality of our relationships)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the government and agencies do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself and how it relates to the outside world)?
- What parts of the changes needed can/must community do on their own with little or no help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are required from outside the community to support the processes of making the changes that are needed?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

### **4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to create a politically healthy future?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?



The participants of the Community Story process in Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg had a very animated discussion about the political life of the community. Their insights and suggestions are summarized below.

## **1. What is political life in the community like now?**

The following themes were highlighted as ones that are shaping the political life of the Peguis First Nation.

### ***Influence from the “Outside”***

The Indian Act has legislated virtually every aspect of life and the Federal and Provincial governments continue to determine a great deal of what happens. It is extremely difficult for the Peguis First Nation to determine its own development path when it has to fit into a pattern that is imposed from the outside in terms of funding formula as well as program criteria. As a result, many of the rules and conditions that Peguis has to follow just don't fit and certainly aren't producing a widespread improvement in the life of the people. A very significant issue arising from the Indian Act and subsequent Federal Government rulings has to do with membership in the Peguis First Nation. Determining which individuals are eligible for membership and ensuring that they are all properly registered is a big task that is now underway, but again the rule about just who is and who isn't a member has been determined from the outside.

### ***Disunity***

The community is deeply divided between two political “camps”. These divisions are very visible. For example, when the community has a meeting, people even sit on different sides of the hall, depending on whom they support. They even get criticized if they go over to another table. This separation carries through in every aspect of community life when people won't work together because they supported different individuals for the position of chief.

*Politics is frustrating. Whoever gets in should be respected even if you didn't vote for him or her.*

### ***Participation***

Some people feel that they cannot speak out their point of view without being criticized by other community members. They are also afraid that they might lose their jobs or they or their family members may be discriminated against in terms of receiving benefits. Other people simply feel that they don't have a voice. It doesn't matter what

they say, no one is listening, so they just give up. Still others have barriers to participation (such as the lack of transportation to get to community events).

### ***Political Interference***

Band departments and programs are sometimes directed to take certain actions by political leaders, even though those actions may go against established policies and procedures. There is a strong feeling that Chief and Council should focus on governance issues, such as safeguarding treaty rights, and Band programs and departments should be supported to do their jobs without interference.

### ***On and Off-reserve Benefits***

Off-reserve voting has caused a lot of issues for Peguis. Some people think it is right; others don't. There is a divide between Peguis and St. Peters that goes back one hundred years. Currently, efforts are being made to extend benefits to off-reserve members, but this is creating its own problems, since federal funding formulae do not provide per capita grants for off-reserve members. Communication is still a big challenge. Off-reserve members often don't know what is going on.

## **2. What can we learn from the past?**

In the past, we all worked together. Chief and Council collaborated with the former Chief and Council. When there was more unity, people weren't afraid to share because of what they feared might happen to them. When people came together, they greeted each other and shook hands. People might get mad, but they would soon forget. Now people remember forever if they have a grudge against someone.

*Long ago  
there was  
no politics.  
Now it is all  
politics.*

Long ago, the elders made decisions about politics. The pipe was a way of guiding people and making decisions. A strong ideal was giving everyone a chance to participate. People were able to share. The community worked on one thing at a time. In this way they made steady progress. One participant in the Community Story process put it this way, "If we had our own self-government like we had long ago, we would have a beautiful political life."



### 3. What will things be like politically in a positive future?

In a positive future, Peguis will have its own election code and legislation that are in line with its traditions. The Peguis First Nation will enjoy its rights without having every aspect of life controlled by external rules and conditions. The elders will give advice to the leaders, and leaders will take that advice seriously.

*If we had our own self-government, we would be able to make our own rules and plans that work better for us. The Federal Government never lived in a community and their rules don't always apply to us.*

Leaders will think of themselves as servants of the people. They will set an example and make sure that people are looked after. They will be involved in healing the people. They will let people know they don't have to fight over who gets in. Whoever wins an election will be respected by everyone, even if you didn't vote for that person. Political leaders will follow the policies and procedures that have been established for the wellbeing of the community. Band department and program staff will have the autonomy to manage to resources with which they have been entrusted for the benefit of all members of the community.

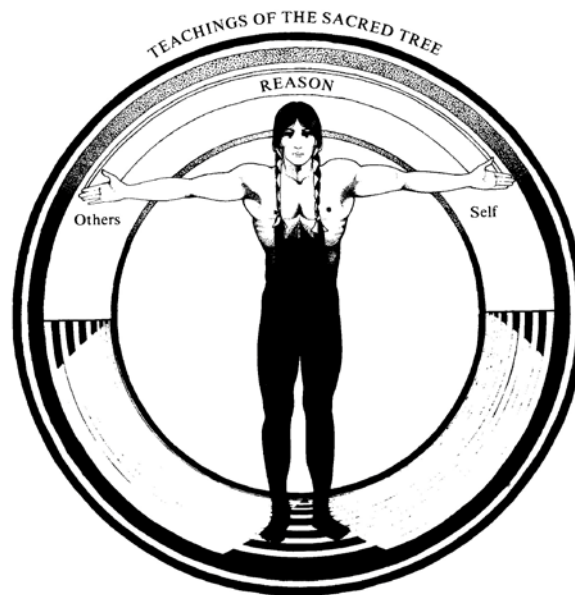
People will be united. They will stick together and work together. When they see each other, they will shake hands and say hello. They will stop gossiping and blaming. There will be fairness and equality. Everyone will have a voice in the decisions that are made about the development of the community. Everyone receive equal benefits regardless of for whom they voted.

### 4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?

The following suggestions were made by the Community Story participants about how to move forward in creating a healthier political life in the community.

1. **Elders Council** - Create an elders council that would serve as an advisory group for Chief and Council. These elders would also help educate the whole community, and especially young people about how to organize and manage community life, how to select leadership and how to become a real leader of the people.
2. **Build unity** – More gatherings/events are needed to rebuild a strong sense of community. These events need to be organized in such a way that everyone has a voice and that people get out of their political factions to mix with each other.

3. ***Commit to political non-interference*** – Political leaders can develop and commit to a code of ethics that protects them from using their positions of authority to influence community affairs in ways that violate established policies and procedures.
4. ***Continue to work toward self-government*** – As Peguis develops its own election code and legislation, it will be able to create a political system that is truly participatory, that attracts the best leaders, and that unites people in the ongoing work of the development of the Nation.



## ECONOMIC LIFE

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The small groups that worked on the economic life of the community used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

**1. *What is the economic life of the community like now?***

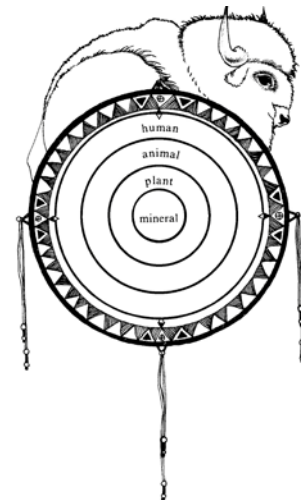
- How are people getting what they need to live (to meet their basic needs)? Is there a difference between people living on and off reserve?
- How are the people's personal, social, spiritual and other kinds of development being affected by the way they are obtaining money and the material things they need to live?
- How well off are people in the communities today? Do people have what they need in order to live a healthy, balanced life? Can people afford the basic necessities? Are things different in this regard for people who live on or off the reserve?
- What are the main economic barriers, obstacles and problems faced by the community? What are the assets and strengths the community has that can contribute to a sound economic foundation?
- Who are the worst off economically in our communities? Why?
- How is the way people are earning a living affecting the natural environment (air, water, earth, plants, animals)? How is the environment influencing the people's economy? What is happening with the people's relationship with the natural environment?

**2. *What can we learn from the past about economic life?***

- How is what is happening today different from the way it was in the past? What, if anything, was lost that we need today?

**3. *What would economic life be like in a positive future?***

- What would a truly healthy community be like economically?
- What are the key things that will have to change in order to achieve a healthy economic future for our communities:
  - Personal level (i.e., the individual members of the community)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e. significant relationships among community members)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the government, agencies and businesses do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself)?
- What other personal and community development issues must be addressed in order to effectively address the challenge of economic development, both on and off reserve?
- What do we have as people and as a community that we can build on for a better economic future?
- Who has to be involved in making the changes that are needed?
- What part of the needed changes can communities do on their own, with little or no help from the outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of help are required from outside the community to support the process of making the needed changes?



- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

**4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to create a future that is economically healthy?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

Based on how most societies have lived and prospered in the past, true economic development is based on harvesting from the earth, manufacturing (i.e., making things), providing services others need, and cooperating and trading with neighbors. This means that true economic development is paid for (powered or driven) by hard work and healthy economic relationships with the earth and other people. The participants of the Community Story process in Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg shared the following insights and suggestions about creating a more prosperous and equitable Nation.

**1. *What is the economic life of the community like now?***

The individuals who discussed the economic life of the community spoke about the following themes.

***High Levels of Unemployment and Dependency Thinking***

- Today roughly 30% of the working age population in Peguis is actually working (mostly for the Band). About 70% are unemployed, and roughly 80% of the households live entirely or partially from social assistance or some other form of government funding.
- Dependency thinking is a big obstacle to economic progress in Peguis. Many of our people have very low self-esteem and little or no desire to work. Many would rather stay at home and collect welfare because, they say, “Why should I work? If I work I have to pay my own housing, hydro, food bills—everything. If I stay home, the Band pays for everything.”
- We will soon be the largest landowners in Manitoba (after the TLE Trust land acquisitions are complete). We can develop “our economy” all we want, but if there is no social development, our people will not be able to benefit, and even generations to come will be trapped in poverty just like many of us are now. Economic development and social development have to go hand in hand.

*The fact that 70% of our people don't work, and don't even want to work is a huge barrier to bringing our community into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

***The High Cost of Poverty***

- At current social assistance levels, between 70-80% of Peguis people are living below the Canada low-income cut-off (i.e., the official poverty line), and experts generally agree that the “official” poverty level is set roughly 30% too low for most families to meet basic nutrition, health, and other essential requirements for a healthy life. In other words, a very large proportion of Peguis people are living in poverty.

- b. This problem is made even worse as government insured health benefits are cut and families living with chronic health problems are made to bear the burden of additional costs. The result is that many Peguis people (including children and elders) are forced to go without needed medical treatment, medicines, dental and eye care, equipment (like wheel chairs, canes, crutches, etc.) and other health requirements.

### ***Economic Development Realities***

- a. There are about 25 Peguis businesses. Most only employ a few people. Band-run enterprises such as Home Hardware or the grocery store are only now learning how to turn a profit. Most businesses have been operating for years at a loss, or on a break-even basis.
- b. At the Band level, Peguis has very little “own source income”. We earn roughly \$2-3 million a year from our VLT and Bingo operations. Most of the other businesses are not yet generating a profit, and our operations cost \$47 million a year. Without our own sources of income (besides government funding), we can never truly be “sovereign” (i.e., in charge of our own destiny) because whatever monies we get from government comes with so many condition and controls that we have very little say about how the money is actually spent. So, besides raising the level of household income, we also need to plan for how we will generate income for the community as a whole, and for the Band.
- c. We have done serious damage to the environment through clear-cut logging near the river and allowing over use of agricultural chemicals on the land by outside leaseholders. Part of our economic future needs to be cleaning up our environmental act.
- d. Right now the Peguis economy lacks many basic components common to prosperous small towns, including a choice of restaurants, a theatre, clothing stores, a drug store, an appliance outlet, etc.
- e. Which family you belong to can have a big influence on who gets what economic opportunities or jobs and who doesn’t. This is beginning to change now as opportunities spreading out to more families, but it has definitely been the way things worked for a long time.
- f. Certain families are looked down on by the families with “money”.
- g. On reserve life is seen as “easier” than “off”. When you live “off” programs are not as accessible and you have a lot more expenses. The conveniences are there, but you have a lot more running around to do. Life is much more fast paced in the city. When you live “off” you have to work for everything, so you appreciate everything more. When you are given too much you don’t appreciate any of it.

### ***Barriers to Economic Development***

- a. Lack of basic education and training are barriers for many Peguis people in terms of getting out of poverty and into employment. Peguis needs its own college to help our people to prepare for real social and economic change.
- b. Another extremely serious obstacle to economic progress in Peguis is the deep divisions and conflicts that are now dividing our community. We have two main political factions. The one that is currently in power is almost continually blocked by the group who have lost two

*We can develop our economy all we want, but if there is no social development, our people will not be able to benefit, and even generations to come will be trapped in poverty just like many of us are now.*

elections and who seem willing to destroy anyone's good name or to disrupt any constructive project in order to make their political point. An example of this is the recent (May 2010) court decision related to a case in which the opposition created legal barriers to the Band receiving millions of dollars in land claim settlement until the court case was resolved, costing the Band several hundred thousand dollars in interest. This oppositional behaviour occurs despite the fact that the land claims agreement had been ratified by community referendum. So, solving the disunity problem needs to be a big economic, as well as political priority.

### ***Loss of Values Essential for Economic Development***

- a. The sharing and caring ways of our past are slipping away. Even extended families don't mean much, to many people. Now your family ends at your front door.
- b. Volunteering was part of everyday life in our community's past. That was how we make sure we had lots of programs for kids, and good infrastructure. Now everyone wants to get paid.

### ***Opportunities for Economic Development***

- a. We are standing at the gateway to a very strong and positive economic future as the Treaty Land Entitlement monies come on stream. It might seem like all those millions of dollars is a lot of money. Some people want the money divided up and passed out to everyone (dividends). Others argue that we should very carefully invest that money in ways that will benefit the whole community, not only now but for future generations.

## **2. What can we learn from the past about economic life?**

- a. In the past, everybody worked hard except for very young children and those who were too sick or too old. Children worked along side their parents or older brothers and sisters. There was always a lot to do in every season. We had to work hard in order to survive.
- b. In the long ago days, our people hunted and fished, trapped, and made everything we used from canoes, snowshoes, bows and arrows to clothing, shelter. We gathered fresh greens, berries, nuts and medicine plants in their proper season. We had to know the land and everything that grew and lived there in every season. We knew every stream and lake, where each kind of animal lived and made its home, and how to hunt, trap and gather what we needed. Our people only took what they needed, and we never wasted anything.
- c. Later on our people settled down in Selkirk and we learned to farm. Everybody had gardens. We built beautiful houses out of logs. We became blacksmiths, carpenters, masons and fur trappers, and we earned our living trading with our neighbours. We were so successful and so prosperous that our non-native neighbours became jealous.
- d. Our people were the first indigenous people in Canada to sign a treaty with our European neighbours, but that didn't stop them from forcing us out of our homes and lands at Selkirk, and moving many of our people to the much poorer quality (for farming) northern bush lands that make up the current Peguis Reserve near Fisher Branch. This

Before 1950, there was almost no alcohol. While nobody had much cash, we did have enough to eat, and everybody helped everybody else wherever there was a need. We were a true community and we depended on each other. We all worked hard. No one was idle, not even children or elders.



forced move was very hard on many of our families. It meant that almost everybody had to start all over again after having spent generations opening and developing agricultural lands, building homes, barns and fences as well as community life, and learning how to prosper. Still, our people were used to hard work. Each family got 160 acres of land on the new reserve, and after a few years in a new place, new homes were built, gardens established and a new routine of seasonal work had become established.

- e. From about 1955-1985 tremendous change came to our people. Residential schools educated some, but left many broken or wounded. Alcohol and later drug abuse came in like a sickness that soon affected almost every family. During this same period the welfare system was established, and it was then possible to survive without working. Many of our people learned to expect that the Chief and Council or the government would support them, and that because they had lost lands and livelihood in the past, they were now “owed” a living by “the system”. Our people learned to feel entitled to “free housing”, a monthly cheque, and days on end of idleness. In many the entrepreneurial spirit was almost completely snuffed out.
- f. While there were always families who worked hard, educated their children, avoided heavy drinking and were able to prosper, many of the most economically successful families moved away during this period. Among those who stayed behind, several generations of people grew up with the welfare system and in homes seriously impacted by alcohol and dependency thinking. Very few people had employment, except those who worked for the Band. There were very few successful businesses.

### **3. What would economic life be like in a positive future?**

#### ***Prosperity for all***

No family would be living in poverty. A strong social safety net would be there for those who needed it. There would be employment for everyone capable of working and making a contribution to community life.

#### ***Private and Community Businesses***

Peguis will have many Band-owned enterprises that are very profitable. Some will be located in Peguis, others in Selkirk, and still others in Winnipeg and beyond. Our annual “own source” income will be many times greater than the monies we now receive in government program dollars.

#### ***Community Infrastructure***

Community infrastructure will be of the highest quality, beautifully designed, in excellent repair, and fully used. Among other things, we will have a community multiplex (recreation) complex, with hockey arenas, indoor track, swimming and work out facilities, a gym, a theatre, and ample space for community groups of all kinds to meet. As well,

*We will have many private and community owned businesses, including a wide variety of commercial establishments such as restaurants, movie houses, a coffee shop, a hotel—a healthy mix of basic infrastructure both privately and publically owned that would make Peguis a pleasant and comfortable place to live.*



we will have a new Band office, a college, a new economic development complex, complete with space for small business incubation, affordable housing for all, a new health centre, bike, walking and jogging paths, and a well-developed town centre “main street” with lots of shops, restaurants and services. We will also have an industrial park, easy access to doctors, dentists and other health providers and a community transportation service.

### ***Developing the People***

We will have invested a great deal in the education, training and healing of all our people, and most of us will have moved well beyond dependency and entitlement thinking and patterns of alcohol and drug addiction. Most of us will have a solid basic education and will want to work, and we will want to make a positive contribution to our families and to our community. We will have unity within our community circle—a unity that allows and accommodates for a wide diversity of opinions and perspectives, but that allows everyone to work together for the prosperity of all.

*Without our own sources of income (besides government funding), we can never be truly sovereign. Besides raising the level of household income, we also need to plan for how we will generate income for the community as a whole, and for the Band.*

### ***Financial Sustainability***

In our positive future, Peguis will be free of debt. It will be able to meet the needs of the community in a sustainable way.

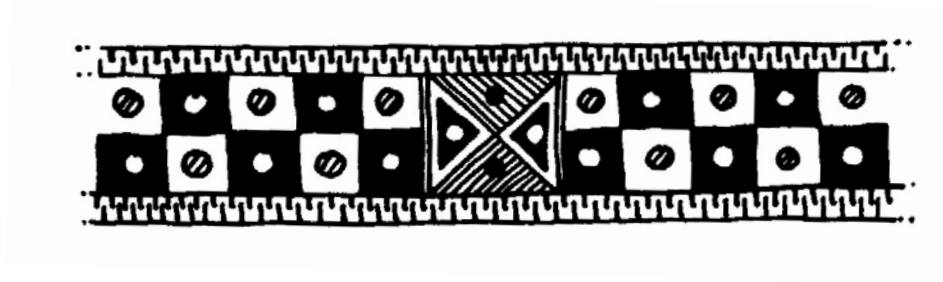
## **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

The Community Story participants who worked on the topic of economic development made the following suggestions for next steps.

- ***Human resource development*** – A massive human resources development campaign is needed. We need to invest in our people—in personal growth, healing, life skills, basic education, cultural identity, job skills, entrepreneurial training, and business development. We need to start with our young people. To do all of this we need our own college.
- ***Dependency and entitlement thinking*** – We need to address dependency and entitlement thinking head on through public education, incentives and a gradual reform of our social welfare system. Part of this solution is disconnecting our political

system from our programs, so that built-in safeguards and incentives to change are not undermined by politics.

- **Investing TLE funds** – The TLE settlement monies need to be very wisely and carefully invested so that the lands we purchase and the other investments we make bring us real social and economic benefits.
- **Building unity** – We must resolve the disunity issues our community is struggling with so that we are not continuously undermining our own progress because of politics and conflicts.



## SOCIAL LIFE

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The small groups that worked on the economic life of the community used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

### 1. *What is the social life of the community like now?*

- What is the current reality of social wellbeing in our communities? Remember to consider the difference between life on and off the reserve when you consider the following aspects of this question: family wellbeing/health; levels of substance abuse; levels of communal violence; levels of crime against property and people; levels of physical and sexual abuse; levels of mutual support and a climate of encouragement; levels of gossip and backbiting; levels of cooperation and volunteering; how the community responds to emergencies or crises; how the community accepts outsiders; how the community forgives those who break the rules or offend people; how the community deals with diversity, minority views, and those who are different; etc.
- Is the community unified or divided (common vision, shared plans, sense of identity, feelings of belonging, mutual support and love)? How does the fact that people live both on and off the reserve affect unity?
- Does the community have control over those things that lead to health (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, environmental, etc.)?
  - Is there a strong sense of collective awareness, decision-making and action related to health?
  - Is there a strong emphasis on the promotion of human wellness (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual) and the prevention of sickness or injury, or is most "health" money and energy focused on the medical mission of sick care?
- Is education as it is now meeting the learning needs of the people?
  - Are kids dropping out of school?
  - Are school leavers able to contribute usefully to their own (economic) upkeep and to community development?
  - Is their a portion of the population that education is not serving well?
  - Does the community provide opportunities for life-long learning for its members?
  - What needs to change about the educational system?
- Are current social welfare and child protection programs effective? Why or why not? What needs to change?
- Is the justice system (i.e. the police and the courts) working? If not, what changes are needed?
- Do health, education, welfare or justice program initiatives address the people's real social development needs? What should change in the way these programs work?

### 2. *What can we learn from the past about social life?*

- How is what is happening today different from the way it was in the past? What, if anything, was lost that we need today?



### 3. *What would social life be like in a positive future?*

- What would a socially healthy community be like?
- What will have a change in the way we live and carry on our community life in order to create socially healthy and viable communities?
  - Personal level (i.e. personal growth, healing, learning)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e. the way we relate to one another)?
  - Organizational level (i.e. what the agencies, programs and community organizations do)?
  - Community level (i.e. how the community organizes itself, interacts and relates to the outside world)?
- What can/must the communities do for themselves without much outside help?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

### 4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to create a future that is socially healthy?*

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

Social life refers to community wellbeing and health, to how the community cares for those in need, to the processes of educating the next generation, and to prevailing patterns of social interaction, community solidarity and unity. Western society has organized social development into three main categories of work: 1) health, 2) education and 3) helping the needy (welfare). The questions above touched on those three areas, but also on the more basic issues such as unity, caring, sharing and community identity. The participants of the Community Story process in Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg put forward the following observations and suggestions related to the social life of the community.

*Our people are not as healthy as we were 15-20 years ago.*

## 1. *What is the social life of the community like now?*

### *Community Wellbeing and Health*

- a. Our people are not as healthy as we were 15-20 years ago. There is a lot more cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease, diabetes and obesity, even in very young people. We also have lots of mental health issues like depression, physical and sexual abuse, addictions and gambling.
- b. Our health services are working very hard, but they are underfunded. They keep getting cut back. Our insured health benefits are also cut way back and this is causing real hardship for families living with chronic disease or injury. Now people living way below the poverty line are expected to pay for some of their own medications, for most dental and eye care, and for equipment like wheelchairs, walkers, canes and crutches. What usually happens is they end up going without unless some program can help them out.
- c. Our pharmacy services take a long time to get prescriptions out.

- d. Healthy lifestyles are being promoted in the community by different programs, and it's working for some people, who are taking up walking, running, participation in sports, and healthy nutrition.
- e. Approximately 75% of Peguis households have someone living in the house who is drinking or using drugs regularly, and some 80% of Peguis children are exposed to drinking, drug use, and other kinds of risks, dysfunction and neglect, that often goes with addiction.
- f. There are also many hundreds of Peguis people who are on a path of healing and self-development, who are strong in their spiritual path, and who have been working quietly (or sometimes not so quietly) for years to move the community toward wellness. What seems to be missing is that many of these people are not working together with the others. There is no visible *movement* within the community for healing, wellness and community development, that brings people from different churches and spiritual paths, and different advocates for healing and wellness into one powerful stream moving through the community that others could become a part of.
- g. The diet and lifestyle of Peguis people has changed significantly in the past 20-30 years. Before we grew our own gardens, hunted, fished and had very little money to buy store bought goods. Now very few people garden or harvest wild meat and other native foods. Most people eat way too much sugar, refined food and fat. In the past we walked everywhere we went, worked hard and got lots of exercise. Today, many of us get very little exercise.
- h. Programs working for the health and wellness of the community are not working together with each other.

*Approximately 75% of Peguis households have someone living in the house who is drinking or using drugs regularly.*

### **Education**

- a. Many participants spoke of the need to raise the standard of educational outcomes in the Peguis School. It is reported that when Peguis graduates enter post-secondary programs outside of Peguis, they are typically 2-3 grade levels behind their counterparts from the rest of Manitoba. Participants pointed out that the Peguis School appears to have a de-facto "push-through" policy because they are funded and rewarded by the numbers of students registered and "graduated". What this means in practice is that some students pass and graduate without having really learned what they should have learned, and when they find themselves in a post-secondary program or new job they are handicapped.
- b. The Peguis school system (reportedly) receives between \$2500-5000 less per child (depending on the needs of the child) than schools in the rest of Manitoba (except for other reserve schools, which all receive the same significantly lower rate).
- c. Peguis School has a "scary attendance record". Many children who should be in school are not in school a significant number of days a year.
- d. The Peguis School seems to push out the hard to reach kids that don't do well in school or who have social problems. This ends up being a fairly large number of kids. When kids show up for school late, they are sent home. When a child becomes a problem to a teacher at school they are sent home. How will our kids learn if they are always being sent home? The school needs to learn to deal more effectively with kids problems.

- e. Parents often side with their kids when people in authority (such as teachers) are trying to discipline them. This undermines the effectiveness of the teachers, and teaches young people that they don't need to respect authority. Parents who do this need to attend to their own healing instead of playing out their own hurts by attacking others.
- f. Many community members observed that the Peguis School curriculum seems to be very weak in Peguis traditional languages, culture, history and values. Some of this (perceived) exclusion of culture from the curriculum is thought to be rooted in the contention that exists in the community over religion and traditional spirituality.
- g. The absence of a core curriculum dealing with culture and identity in the school system means many Peguis graduates end up in post-secondary programs or first time employment unsure of who they are, confused about their identity, and unable to cope with the racism and prejudice they encounter in life off the Reserve.
- h. The school curriculum closely follows the Manitoba Provincial curriculum, and as such, it doesn't even try to address the actual day-to-day realities of life on the reserve. If education is supposed to be a preparation for life, our Peguis education needs to prepare Peguis students for Peguis life. In part that means learning math and science, english and all the other stuff, so our kids can be doctors, lawyers, nurses, business managers and Indian chiefs. But it also means teaching our kids who they are and where they come from, and it also means helping them to overcome the social challenges many of them have inherited from their families and community life, such as bullying, addictions, and lateral violence.  
  
The school curriculum has to be more than just academic. It also needs to be practical. It needs to teach kids how to cope with their everyday life challenges like bullying, alcohol and drugs, how to be safe around drinking and domestic violence, and how to act in the workplace when they get a job.
- i. Parents, family members, and especially elders were the educators of the next generation. Now we have professional teachers, but something is missing. Our elders provide a living link to the past, to our identity as native people, and to the wisdom our people have accumulated over many generations. We need to have our elders involved in the education of our children. They should be an important part of the school program.
- j. Our child and youth population have many health related problems, such as alcohol and drug abuse, unhealthy nutrition, dental problems, obesity, early onset diabetes and heart disease—and a lot of this is preventable. We need to use the school as a platform for health education and intervention.

*It is reported that when Peguis graduates enter post-secondary programs outside of Peguis, they are typically 2-3 grade levels behind their counterparts from the rest of Manitoba.*

## **Community Relations**

### **Disunity and Conflict**

- a. Peguis is a deeply divided and conflictual community. We are divided over religion, politics and long-standing issues between families—and across generations.
- b. The disunity between us is like a sickness. It weakens us. It makes us unable to solve many important community problems. It's affecting every aspect of life in Peguis. It is in our Chief and Council, in every Committee and Boards, in our Band administration and programs, in between Peguis people living on the reserve and



those in Selkirk and Winnipeg, in the school, in the churches, in our families...it's everywhere.

- c. [An] extremely serious obstacle to economic progress in Peguis is the deep divisions and conflicts that are now dividing our community. We have two main political factions. The one that is currently in power is almost continually blocked by the group who have lost two elections and who seem willing to destroy anyone's good name or to disrupt any constructive project in order to make their political point. An example of this is the recent (May 2010) court decision related to a case in which the opposition created legal barriers to the Band receiving millions of dollars in land claim settlement until the court case was resolved, costing the Band several hundred thousand dollars in interest. This oppositional behaviour occurs despite the fact that the land claims agreement had been ratified by community referendum. So, solving the disunity problem needs to be a big economic, as well as political priority.
- d. The religious groups (including the traditionalists) harbour and encourage a lot of divisions, mistrusts, walls and talking each other down on all sides. But there are good people in most of the groups who could be brought together with the right leadership.

The unity of the religious groups is a fundamental key to rebuilding trust and unity for Peguis...political alliances can change, but deep down our religious beliefs remain.

#### On and Off Reserve

- a. There are important differences in terms of who gets what services and opportunities, and even in terms of how much say we have in Band decision-making between Peguis people living on reserve and the rest of us living in Selkirk and Winnipeg. Everyone should be treated equal, and that's not happening now.
- b. The current leadership is really trying to create more equality for Peguis people living in Selkirk and Winnipeg, but this policy is creating a problem in terms of Band finances. Federal Government funding only pays for on-reserve people for many programs. This administration has been trying to extend benefits to everyone on and off reserve, but we don't have the money for that, and in part at least, this has contributed significantly to the Bands financial problems, and is especially affecting our ability to pay down the deficit at the rate we should be.
- c. Many of us don't seem to be able to have a respectful conversation about politics. Instead of listening and talking respectfully, we get mad. People start raising their voices to explain their concerns, and then pretty soon everybody's mad and shouting. Then our people start avoiding public meetings and stop expressing their concerns.

*Many of us don't seem to be able to have a respectful conversation about politics. Instead of listening and talking respectfully, we get mad.*

#### Community Life

- a. Despite all the conflict we have a strong community, with lots of pride and lots of people doing lots of good things.
- b. If you want to see the real spirit of Peguis go to a funeral. People really come together and support each other. If we do it for funerals, we can do it for other things.
- c. Other big community events are Treaty Days and hockey and ball tournaments. We really support our kids and lots of people come out.



- d. Unfortunately, there are a lot of families who can't afford to put their kids in hockey or can't afford to travel to tournaments and so some people are just left out.
- e. Volunteering used to be a way of life for us. Now many of our community recreation programs are shut down because they can't get volunteers to help with supervision. People want to be paid and they are too wrapped up in their own stuff (like gambling). They just drop their kids off and drive away, they expect other people to support their kids.

## 2. What can we learn from the past about social life?

- a. When Chief Peguis led his people out of Ontario, it was to be closer to good areas for fur trapping and hunting. We settled down near Selkirk and gradually learned to farm. But we were always a close-knit community. We helped each other. Everybody worked hard all year round. We had to in order to survive.
- b. Our elders had strong teachings about unity. They observed from nature that if the different parts of living things became separated from one another, death was not far away. If a family or group of hunters and gatherers stopped cooperating with one another, that group could not even survive a single winter. They taught that whenever the circle of the community is broken, an empty space is left through which disease can enter into the community. They understood that everyone is related to everyone else, and that we are all connected by blood and spirit. They believed that separation and disunity should be viewed as a dangerous sickness, and that when it occurred, extreme measures should be taken to heal the problem and prevent it from reoccurring.
- c. In the past, people visited each other and we always had lots of activities that we did together. Such as gardening, quilting, putting up food for the winter, cutting firewood, hunting and fishing traps, helping someone build their house or a barn...we really did help each other, and no one was left out. We also had bonfires, wiener roasts, card games and lots of times we just sat and talked about many things, including community life.
- d. People lived a much healthier lifestyle even 20-30 years ago than we do now. Everyone worked hard, walked a lot, and got lots of exercise. We only ate healthy foods—vegetables we grew, beef, pork and chickens we raised, wild meat and fish we hunted, berries we gathered. We didn't have money for store bought food. There was no junk food in those days and our people were a lot healthier. They got fewer sicknesses and many lived a long time.
- e. In the traditional ways of our people, we had the seven grandfather teachings (wisdom, love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, truth) and our elders made sure every person knew how we are connected to the spirit of all life, to our mother earth and to each other. We had ceremonies at important passages in life such as the birth of a child, coming of age, first kill, marriage, death, and also for healing, and finding your spiritual path through life.

*The unity of the religious groups is a fundamental key to rebuilding trust and unity for Peguis...political alliances can change, but deep down our religious beliefs remain.*

These things are not so different in the teachings of the churches. We all believe that love, forgiveness, kindness and honesty are important, and that we need to turn our hearts and spirits to the Creator everyday in order to be healthy and happy in our lives.

- f. A lot of the way our people educated their children in the long ago days was through young people watching their elders working and doing things together with them. Boys learned to make snowshoes, to hunt and trap, and to find their way from anyplace to anyplace else on the land in any season and still be safe. Girls learned about preserving food, making clothes, and also making moose hair tufting and beading. Later on we also learned about carpentry, farming, blacksmithing, and other skills needed for our life in Selkirk. Most of the learning was practical, and the most important thing was training the character of a child to be a good person.

### 3. What will social life be like in a positive future?

- a. We will have healed the differences that now divide us. While our people will always have strong views, and we won't ever all agree on everything, we will be able to consult together as a community, listen respectfully to each other, and weave together solutions and plans that are win-win for all of us. We will never again allow deep divisions go unresolved between us.
- b. Our people will live and work together guided by a code of conduct that is respected and practiced by all of us, something like the seven grandfather teachings. It will not be acceptable for anyone to use violence, put-downs, back fighting and personal attacks in order to win a political or religious point. We will guard and protect the sacredness of our unity.
- c. Our people will be much healthier than we are now. We will eat fresh and healthy foods, have many different choices for physical activity, and our personal and community wellness will be an example to other communities of what is possible. We will gradually and steadily reduce alcohol and drugs, and other kinds of abuse, and our people will be well along the paths of individual and community healing.
- d. Our educational system will be life long, beginning in early childhood and continuing in assisting our elders both to teach and to continue learning in their own lives. Our languages and our cultures will be strongly reflected in the school curriculum. Our children will grow up being aware and proud of who they are and where they have come from.

*If education is supposed to be a preparation for life, our Peguis education needs to prepare Peguis students for Peguis life.*

Graduates of the Peguis School will have educational achievements equal with or better than children across Canada, and we will have our own college that prepares our people for many kinds of jobs and professions. Our Peguis School will be so good that our children will hate to miss even one day. The school will be especially good at helping children with problems to heal their hearts and to find their life's path.

### 4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?

#### **About healing the divisions and conflict**

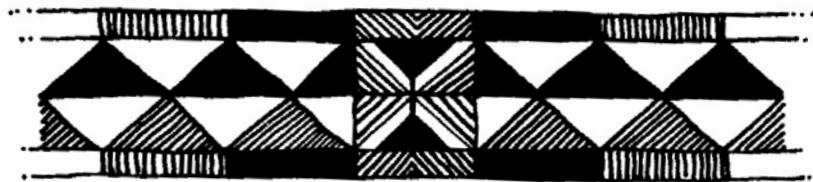
- a. The unity of the religion groups (both churches and traditional practioners) is a very important key to rebuilding trust and unity for Peguis...

The key to moving the community out of this present pattern of conflict and disunity is to get a circle of religious leaders together from across all traditions who will work on building a new circle of unity, and on giving a few simple but really important messages to their own circles.

- ❖ We are really one people. We are all related.
- ❖ Building unity takes constant hard work in educating people about how to “see” each other, and how to relate to each other so that unity is the result. As well as perseverance—not giving up for as long as it takes.

Role model leadership is needed as religious and spiritual leaders bring their circles into a hoop of many hoops. Political alliances can change, but deep down, our religious beliefs remain.

- b. We need lots of meetings like this one (the comprehensive community planning/community story meeting held in May and June 2010) where we really talk to each other about things that matter, and where we really listen respectively to what we all have to say, and where what we say really matters because it contributes to making a new future for our community. Making community plans that are created by community members is a very good start.
- c. Our language, cultural teachings, and our history need to be put into the school curriculum. We need to make sure that when our kids leave school they know who they are and where they come from, and they feel connected to the circle of our community.
- d. All the departments and programs working on any part of community wellness need to come together and they need to bring together all the community members who are on a personal wellbeing path and all of these people together need to make a plan of how they can create a “movement” in Peguis for healing, and how they can all work together to make it happen.
- e. We need lots of creative and fun activities that don’t cost much money, but that brings us all together.
- f. After we have a community plan, then we have to do our own plan, and that’s going to take all of us working together. Invite us to help. Many of us will come.



## SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

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The small groups that worked on the spiritual and cultural life of the community used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

**1. *What is the spiritual and cultural life of the community like now?***

- Do we have a healthy sense of who we are as human beings and do our communities have a sense of their identity?
- What is the current condition of our traditional culture (such as language; spiritual knowledge and practices; healing arts and knowledge; survival technologies and knowledge; music, arts and stories)?
- Do our young people respect and learn about the old ways from the elders?
- What is the relationship like between our traditional ways and the churches? What impact are the churches having on life today? What is good and what needs to change about the way the churches work in our communities?
- Do our people have a shared/common vision of what kind of communities we want to build and of who we want to be in a healthy future? Do we have a clear idea of what moral and philosophical principles we need to live by in order to develop our potential as human beings? In short, do we know where we need to go (as human beings and as communities) and how to get there?

**2. *What can we learn from the past about cultural and spiritual life?***

- To what extent are we drawing on the cultural knowledge, wisdom and resources from the past to help us solve critical problems of today?
- Is it useful or important to do so?

**3. *What would spiritual and cultural life be like in a positive future?***

- What would a community be like if it were truly healthy and strong in the area of culture and spirituality?
- What will have to change in order to achieve this ideal?
  - Personal level (i.e., personal growth, healing, learning)?
  - Interpersonal level (i.e., the nature and quality of our relationships)?
  - Organizational level (i.e., what the agencies, community organizations and churches do)?
  - Community level (i.e., how the community inter-relates and organizes itself and how it relates with the outside world)?
- What parts of the needed changes can/must communities do on their own with little or no help from outside? What actions are needed?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

**4. *What are the main goals to be achieved to create a future that is culturally and spiritually healthy?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

This area refers to the general pattern of life by which people live. It includes their sense of identity, their customs, beliefs, values, morals, ideals, ceremonies and spiritual practices, as well as their



traditional language, ways of knowing, technologies, arts, crafts and sciences.

We refer to "culture" and "spirituality" within development mostly to talk about the "software" of development; i.e., the guiding principles and the vision which call us to a possible and desirable future, and which shape how we go about the processes of change.

For many peoples, conflict between the dominant culture (European capitalism, materialism and commercialism) and indigenous or "traditional" cultural ways is an important part of the struggle for health and balance.

When we talk about "spirituality" we're not talking about any particular religion. Rather, we are talking about our human capacity to know and love the Creator, and to choose ways of living that are life-promoting and life-enhancing. We talk about spirituality together with culture because spirit animates the heart of all living culture, and because without spirit, cultures, like individuals, become dead things, unable to grow and change.

*Spirit animates the heart of all living culture. Spirituality is the capacity to know and love the Creator and to choose a life path that leads to wellbeing and unity.*

The participants in the Community Story process from Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg offered the following observations and suggestions related to the spiritual and cultural life of their communities.

## **1. What is the spiritual and cultural life of the community like now?**

The following themes can be used to summarize the discussions on this topic.

### ***Importance of Spirituality***

It is impossible to separate spirituality and culture. Both of these are forces for positive individual, family and community development. They help people live according to values such as courtesy, sharing, courage, honesty and perseverance. They promote equity, unity and justice. They provide focus and meaning for life, as well as hope and patience when times are tough. Cultural knowledge covered all aspects of daily life, including what to do when people were sick or injured. People knew how to recognize and collect medicines.

### ***Loss of Spirituality***

It seems that many people today have lost a connection to the Creator and to the life-preserving, life-enhancing values listed above. Today's life is so busy with work,

family and leisure activities that some people do not find the time to practice basic spiritual disciplines such as daily prayer, or weekly church services or seasonal ceremonies. Other people have become cynical about spiritual groups of all kinds because of the way that they criticize each other.

### ***Cultural revival***

At the same time, like many other First Nations people, Peguis is experiencing a cultural revival. The traditional teachings and ceremonial practices that were suppressed during colonial times are being revived. There is a growing interest in learning Ojibway and/or Cree and in learning traditional skills and practices. Some people are also regaining their understanding about natural medicines and are making the proper collection and preservation of medicine plants a part of their family life. A big concern is that some of this rich cultural history and knowledge will be lost if it is not passed on orally and documented, since the elders who still remember the traditional ways are passing on.

### ***Religious Divisions***

A very troubling aspect of this topic to all the participants is the observation that the community is deeply divided between those individuals and families who practice traditional spirituality and Christians. At times this division is very harsh, with people on both sides deeply hurt by the things that are being said about them. During the Community Story process, there was a very strong call for people to find a way to heal these wounds and to recognize the fundamental unity of all religions and to express that truth through fellowship and respect.

*No matter how we pray, it goes to the same God. Everyone needs to have the freedom to choose his or her own spiritual path.*

## **2. What can we learn from the past about cultural and spiritual life?**

In the past, spirituality and culture were not separate. Cultural wisdom and practices dealt with all aspects of life, from honouring the Creator, to solving interpersonal conflicts, harvesting food from a generous earth, and healing sickness when it occurred. Spirituality had to do with how you lived your life by practicing the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Elders had a huge responsibility for ensuring that the next generations received the knowledge and skills that they needed for life.



In the more recent past, many Peguis people joined Christian churches and found the same basic teachings about how to live in that circle. At the same time, some of these churches brought disunity when condemned traditional spirituality and also perpetrated very serious abuses in the context of residential schooling. This part of the past still haunts Peguis families. The intergenerational trauma of this part of the past continues to be felt in the daily lives of some residential school survivors and families have been torn apart by this pain.

### **3. What will spiritual and cultural life be like in a positive future?**

In the positive future, every individual and every family will be free to make their choice of a spiritual path. Everyone will have a positive connection to a belief and value system that gives meaning and purpose to their lives. Spirituality will be a source of joy and solace. The wounds of the community's history of residential schooling and other forms of colonialization will be healed and the people will be able to move into the future with hope and harmony. Elders will be healthy and respected as they fulfill their role as educators of the next generation. Peguis will be proud of its unique cultural heritage and will share that wealth with others, from other First Nations and other cultural groups.

An on-going cultural research process will help Peguis apply cultural knowledge to all aspects of its development—economic, political, social and natural resource management.

### **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

Some concrete suggestions for positive steps in the cultural and spiritual life of the community were made during the Community Story process.

- **Cultural and spiritual reconciliation** - A cultural and spiritual reconciliation process is urgently needed to bring together people of good will from both the traditional and the Christian spiritual paths. People of vision who have chosen both these ways need to forge strong bonds of respect and to demonstrate their commitment to unity through visible collaboration in the community.
- **Cultural research and preservation process** – Attention urgently needs to be given to researching and documenting the cultural heritage of the Peguis First Nation. This includes knowledge and skills related to a broad range of topics, including language,



ceremonies, hunting, the gathering of food and medicinal plants, child rearing, and the selection of leaders.

- ***On-going dialogue*** – The participants of the community Story process requested more opportunities to come together to discuss this important topic. They also felt that many different types of community gatherings (social and cultural) should be held to help Peguis people reconnect with and celebrate their rich cultural heritage.



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

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The small groups that worked on the topic of infrastructure development and management used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

**1. *What is the current infrastructure in the community like?***

- What are our current assets in terms of infrastructure?
- How are these assets benefiting Peguis members—living on reserve, living off the reserve?
- How is our infrastructure being developed and managed? Who makes these decisions? Who is left out of these decisions?
- What is working and what is not working about the community's infrastructure and how it is being managed? What are our major challenges with respect to the development and management of infrastructure? What are our greatest opportunities and assets?
- What are our needs in terms of the development of new infrastructure? How are these needs different for Peguis members living on and off the reserve?

**2. *What can we learn from the past about infrastructure development and management in the community?***

- What can we learn from how we developed and managed infrastructure in the past?
- How have the decisions of the past shaped our current situation in terms of community infrastructure (e.g. housing, recreation, Band programs and services, etc.).

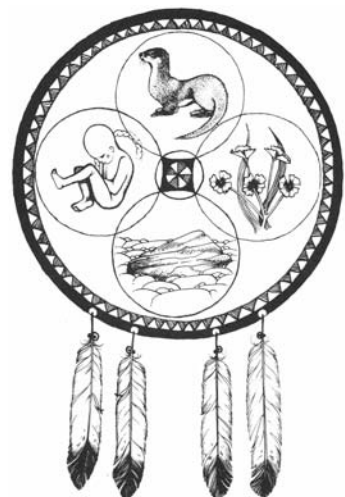
**3. *What would the community's infrastructure be like in a positive future?***

- What would the future be like if Peguis had the infrastructure it needed? What would this infrastructure be used for? How would the development of new infrastructure have changed the community?
- What will have to change in the way the community operates in order to create a future in which infrastructure is developed and managed in such a way as to bring prosperity and health to the community?
- What can the community do without much outside help to bring about this future?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

**4. *What are the main goals to be achieved with respect to infrastructure development and management?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

The Community Story participants from Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg made the following observations and suggestions related to infrastructure development and management during their discussion on these questions listed above.



*Peguis Community Story  
July 2010*

## 1. What is the current infrastructure in the community like?

The discussion about the current infrastructure in the community focused on the following themes.

### ***Substandard Infrastructure***

Many of the roads in the community have potholes and others need to be paved. A better drainage system is needed to control flooding. Roads (especially the main highway) and public buildings need better lighting. Some housing has not been built to code, and now suffers from mold and other problems. Sometimes housing deteriorates because people do not care for their homes. People need to respect the homes they are given by the community. There are also some unsafe wells. They need to be tested and upgraded or replaced as necessary. It is very important not to continue to build in the flood zone. Housing needs to be built on high ground, even if hills have to be created artificially. When soil is moved for building projects, the topsoil should be carefully put aside during construction and then replaced so that landscaping can be successful. Many public buildings get defaced by graffiti. This has to stop.

### ***Needed Infrastructure***

The community needs a multiplex that can accommodate a broad range of recreational, social and cultural activities, including, of course, arenas. Other recreational facilities are also needed, including parks. Drop-in centres in the north and south would facilitate community unity. A public transit system is needed. Currently children and youth are walking on the highway to be able to visit friends and participate in community activities. This is not safe. Besides public transit, lighting on the highway would improve safety. There is a severe shortage of housing in the community. An industrial park and other infrastructure to support manufacturing is needed.

### ***Current Assets***

The people of Peguis have an abundance of knowledge and skills related to building and maintaining infrastructure. They are also willing to pitch-in for a community project, just like they did when the Community Hall was built. In that case, the materials were bought by the Band, but the work was done by volunteers. The new Health Centre is great! The community also has the recreation centre, the mall, a school, the community hall, the daycare, Al-care, the senior home, a water treatment plant, the treaty and pow-wow

*The people are  
our most  
important asset.  
We have a  
wealth of  
knowledge.*

grounds, local churches, and the landfill site. A new security system and the RCMP detachment should improve safety and protect public property.

## **2. What can we learn from the past about infrastructure development and management?**

No discussion about the process by which infrastructure was developed and maintained in the past was held. The only reference to the past described how people worked collaboratively to get projects done. There was a strong spirit of volunteerism and cooperation that has allowed the community to get to where it now is (see the section above on “Current Assets”).

## **3. What would the community’s infrastructure be like in a positive future?**

In the positive future, the community will be operating in a sustainable way. It will be self-sufficient. New infrastructure will be planned for and developed according to the Band’s own assessment of needs. All infrastructure will be built and maintained at a high standard. The community will be beautiful and functional. There will be many different types of recreational, social and cultural facilities. Roads, water treatment, drainage, sewage and waste management systems will be state-of-the-art.

The people will have adequate, affordable and comfortable housing. The community’s infrastructure will accommodate a wide range of economic activities without harming the environment. Community members will have the skills and knowledge to be able to carry out all aspects of the work involved in building and maintaining community infrastructure.

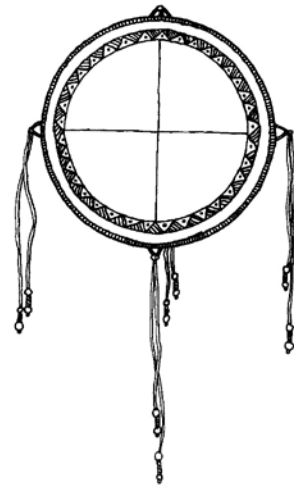
Community members will be proud of their community and will demonstrate that pride by taking excellent care of the community’s facilities and their own homes.

## **4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?**

The following suggestions were made for improving the community’s infrastructure.

- **Dedicated Funding** - The Community needs a dedicated budget for infrastructure development and management. This could involve stronger lobbying with INAC to get the funds we need. We also want Chief and Council to be proactive about our own infrastructure, so that we, as members, can manage new projects. This will allow us to move forward.

- **Competent management** – Proper planning and budgeting for all infrastructure will ensure that projects are completed within budget and on time. This will also ensure that government funding is not withheld or cut back because projects have not been completed as promised.
- **Provincial standards** – All new infrastructure (e.g. housing, community buildings, and transportation systems) should be developed according to provincial standards.
- **Capacity building** – Employees need to be trained so that infrastructure projects are well planned, constructed to code, and properly maintained.
- **Community engagement** – The community needs to be involved in making decision about infrastructure development. Civil society (residents and volunteer groups) can be a valuable source of unskilled and skilled labour, ideas and fundraising efforts.



## LAND SELECTION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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The small groups that worked on the topic of land selection and natural resource management used the following four sets of questions to guide their discussion.

**1. *What is the current situation with respect to the management of the community's lands?***

- What are our current assets in terms of land and natural resources?
- How are these assets benefiting Peguis members—living on reserve, living off the reserve?
- How are our land and natural resources being managed? Who makes these decisions? Who is left out of these decisions?
- What is working and what is not working about how our land and natural resources are being managed? What are our major challenges with respect to land and natural resource management? What are our greatest opportunities and assets?
- What are our needs in terms of the acquisition of new land? How are these needs different for Peguis members living on and off the reserve?

**2. *What can we learn from the past about land and natural resource management?***

- What can we learn from how we managed our lands and natural resources in the past?
- How have the decisions of the past shaped our current situation in terms of land and resource management (e.g. economic development, environmental considerations, etc.).

**3. *How would we manage land and natural resources in a positive future?***

- What would the future be like if Peguis had the land it needed? What would this land be used for? How would the acquisition of new land have changed the community?
- How will Peguis manage its natural resources in a healthy and balanced future?
- What will have to change in the way the community operates in order to create a future in which land and natural resources are managed in such a way as to bring prosperity and health to the community?
- What can the community do without much outside help to bring about this future?
- What sorts of learning are needed? Who needs to learn?

**4. *What are the main goals to be achieved with respect to land selection and natural resource management?***

- In the next 1 to 2 years?
- In the next 5 years?
- In the next 10 years?

The Peguis Treaty Land Entitlement Trust has a twenty-five year mandate to purchase land and fulfill the terms of the Peguis TLE Trust Agreement. In order for



the TLE Trustees to work with the community to purchase land, we need to have a plan to guide us as to what land to purchase, where to purchase the land, the purpose of the land purchase and we have to ensure that we have the resources to purchase what we need. Besides purchasing new land we also need a plan to manage the land and natural resources we already have. The Community Story participants from Peguis, Selkirk and Winnipeg made the following observations and suggestions related to land selection and natural resource management during their discussion on these questions listed above.

### **1. What is the current situation with respect to the management of the community's lands and natural resources?**

The group that discussed land selection and natural resource management offered insights and suggestions in the following areas.

#### ***Current Assets and Land Use***

Peguis has trap lines, hunting territories, berries, roots, medicines, wood, water, animal life, community pastures, gravel pits, a tree program, fishing and housing. Community members have land that they can use for their homes, for gardens and for agriculture. Community members are only able to transfer some of their land to other family members. This is an important policy that needs to be retained. Peguis also leases land to non-members (primarily for agricultural purposes). The community has land that is used for spiritual gatherings. Peguis members who live off the reserve are coming back to the community to participate in traditional activities. This is a trend that should be encouraged since it promotes a healthy lifestyle, instills traditional values such as sharing and respect for the land, and provides the opportunity for people to practice traditional gathering and hunting skills.

*We need to encourage Peguis members living off the reserve to keep their connection to their homeland and families by spending time on the land.*

#### ***Land Acquisition Priorities***

In the past every family was allowed 160 acres. Now some families don't have any land. This needs to be corrected. We need rich land, not land that cannot be developed for economic purposes. If there was enough land, people could spread out and not be squeezed together like in a town site. Also, more land would allow members to open more businesses. We need land for economic development.



## **Land Stewardship**

We are not revitalizing the land that has been cut. The river area was clear-cut and we lost a lot of land from that. The use of chemicals has also destroyed some of our land, and is negatively impacting the health of people. Burning and woodcutting should only be controlled through issuing permits. Members have leased land to non-members who may not be taking care of the land properly. The way we take care of the land and animals affects the whole cycle of life.

## **Decision-making Processes**

The TLE needs to inform the community. We need a community decision, not just decisions made by committees and boards. All community members, elders, adults and youth, should be involved in making decisions about land acquisition and management.

*Who makes the decisions?  
Well, Chief and Council,  
committees and boards—  
other than that, we aren't too  
sure who makes decisions  
and how the land and  
resources are managed.*

## **2. What can we learn from the past about land and natural resource management?**

In the past, the land represented the way of life and provided us with all that we needed—food, heat, and shelter. We understood that we humans are a part of the natural world, not separate from it. That is why we had respect for the land and for all living things. We had mechanisms for sharing the bounty of the land. For example, hunters would share their meat with other community members when the community gathered for pow-wows.

The elders and other adult members of the community made sure that youth learned the skills for living from the land—hunting, trapping, gathering berries, and preparing and preserving food. Gathering and using medicines and making clothing and shelter were also necessary skills. The practical aspects of these skills were very important, but equally essential was passing on the attitudes and values that ensured the sustainable use of the land, and that taught respect for the sacred nature of all forms of life.

The community was more cohesive. When important decisions had to be made, we would come together to talk things out. We had more community events that created a sense of community and that helped us to get to know each other—what our needs and concerns were. We worked together on community projects.

### 3. How would we manage land and natural resources in a positive future?

In a positive future, land use will be managed very conscientiously to ensure that Peguis is a good steward of the environment. The water and soil will be protected from overuse and contamination. Animal and plant life will be used with respect and with an awareness of the need to preserve the future for the generations to come. Young people will learn good stewardship through spending time with elders and other knowledgeable adults, as well as, both those who live in the community and those who return home from time to time.

Peguis will have a comprehensive plan for the ethical use of natural resource such as water, timber, minerals, and medicinal and food plants. Partnerships with outside businesses will ensure that Peguis received fair value, both in terms of employment opportunities and royalties or other sources of revenue. Land will also be set aside for traditional activities, which could include spiritual and healing camps as well as hunting and gathering activities. Ongoing and open community consultation processes

Peguis will use the TLE funds to expend Peguis' land base, both for the use of its members (e.g. making sure that all members have land) as well as for economic activity. Peguis' land base will be diversified to include urban land for housing and economic ventures (which could include retail properties or manufacturing businesses, for example). Peguis will be an ethical steward of land used for entrepreneurial activities, treating its partners with fairness and ensuring that the land is not degraded by the use to which it is put.

Peguis members will have adequate and good quality land for the use of families; residential, agricultural and entrepreneurial ventures. The distribution of this land will occur in a just way regardless of political or family affiliation. The needs of the Peguis members who live in the Selkirk area will receive careful attention.

### 4. What has to happen and what do we have to do to get from where we are now to where we want to go?

The Community Story participants who worked on this topic made the following suggestions for better land and natural resource management

- **Participatory decision-making** – Chief and Council and the TLE Board must inform all members of the community to make sure that the membership can make informed decisions. Special efforts need to be made to involve elders and youth.

- ***Land use management planning and public education*** – A comprehensive land and natural resource management plan needs to be developed that will be able to guide Peguis into a prosperous and sustainable future. At the same time that this plan is being developed, a public education campaign is needed to ensure that all Peguis members understand the basic principles of sustainable resource management, as well as the options available to the community for using their land and resources to achieve greater prosperity and wellbeing for all. This process will enable members to participate more effectively in decision-making processes.
- ***Policies to preserve land and natural resources*** – Policies need to be developed and/or enforced that ensure sustainability. These include retaining the policy that restricts land transfers to family members and the use of permits to manage certain types of activities such as burning waste or grass/wood, the use of hazardous chemicals, and tree cutting.
- ***Land use density*** – There was strong consensus that every family should have access to enough land that they could live “spread out”, rather than in close proximity in the town site.
- ***Land use policies to promote economic development*** – The economy of the community could be expanded through the development of many new businesses (such as a mill which uses the natural resources of the region or retail outlets like a furniture store). For this to happen, land use policies that support this type of activity are needed.

