

To: Jody Wilson-Raybould, Member of Parliament and Minister of Justice of Canada

From: Arash Farhadian

Date: October 7, 2016

Subject: *Proposal for the Determining the Feasibility of an Aboriginal Life-long Education Initiative*

Introduction

Aboriginal people constitute a large portion of Canada's population. The Aboriginal community has experienced great hardship over the years and continues to face issues such as poverty, oppression, and marginalization today (Brown & Hannis, 2012). Large populations of Aboriginal people inhabit Native Reserve Areas, which are known to be some of the poorest locations for living (Maxwell, 2006). Aboriginal people were not only stripped of their language and culture by newcomers, but they were also introduced to deadly diseases, such as measles, smallpox, and influenza (Brown & Hannis, 2012). Over time, the social and economic gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals has tremendously widened, as Aboriginals have been physically, socially, and culturally mistreated and belittled (Brown & Hannis, 2012).

Statement of Problem

Aboriginal communities have suffered extensively due to a progressive chain of events, starting from colonization (Brown & Hannis, 2012). Currently, the poverty problems that Aboriginals continue to face prove that the initiatives in place to address Aboriginal issues are insufficient. The main problem is that the government continually looks for "band-aid" solutions to address the Aboriginals' concerns, which only aggravates the issue in the long run.

Proposed Solution

One possible solution to the problem of poverty amongst Aboriginal communities would be to create a suitable Aboriginal education program to help reduce poverty and increase the Aboriginals in the workforce. This educational program will be a life-long education initiative that will continually provide education and job opportunities for Aboriginal individuals from elementary school to adulthood and beyond. Through researching the various aspects of life of Aboriginal individuals such as current level of satisfaction with life and types of additional support needed, the benefits and effectiveness of this program will become evident. Recently, there have been some professional mentoring initiatives but there is much more to be done to fight poverty amongst Aboriginals.

Scope

To assess the urgency and feasibility of developing an Aboriginal education program, I plan to pursue the following seven areas of inquiry:

1. Is poverty a major problem amongst Aboriginal communities in BC and Canada as a whole?
2. Are Aboriginals in BC satisfied with their life and level of income?
3. What are the conditions on reserves and what are some of the reasons that Aboriginal people on reserves have been forced to relocate to urban areas?
4. Are Aboriginals in BC satisfied with the amount of support they are receiving with education and the workforce?
5. What additional types of support are Aboriginal people in BC who are facing poverty seeking?
6. What are some characteristics that need to be taken into account when creating a life-long education program?
7. What are the details and costs of creating a well-improved educational program to support Aboriginals in BC?

Methods

My primary data source will include conducting interviews at Hastings Elementary Community School, which is a school I volunteer at. I will contact the parents of the students attending the school and collect their input regarding the problems their Aboriginal communities face and possible additional support that could solve the problems. I will also consult with Dr. Bishundayal, the professor for the community of adult education courses at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Dr. Bishundayal is an expert in the field and can provide me with an abundance of resources.

My secondary data sources will include publications on the struggles present in Aboriginal communities and the characteristics of effective educational programs.

My Qualifications:

In June of next year, I will be receiving my B. Sc. in Computer Science with an education minor. I am very knowledgeable about the process involved in the implementation of new educational programs as well as best teaching practices. Furthermore, I am currently volunteering for an afterschool program at Hastings Elementary Community School in East Vancouver that has a high population of Aboriginal students. My association with the Aboriginal community at this afterschool program and my other volunteering experiences give me the skills and opportunities needed to conduct an organized and in-depth feasibility study.

Conclusion

Clearly, action needs to be taken to reduce poverty amongst Aboriginal people and to increase their numbers in the workforce. By addressing the seven areas of inquiry mentioned earlier, I can determine the feasibility of implementing an aboriginal life-long education initiative. Thus, with your approval I will begin this research at once.

Work Cited

Brown, J. D., & Hannis, D. (2012). *Community development in Canada* (2nd ed.).
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Maxwell, J. (2006). *Strategies for social justice: place, people and policy*. Retrieved
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