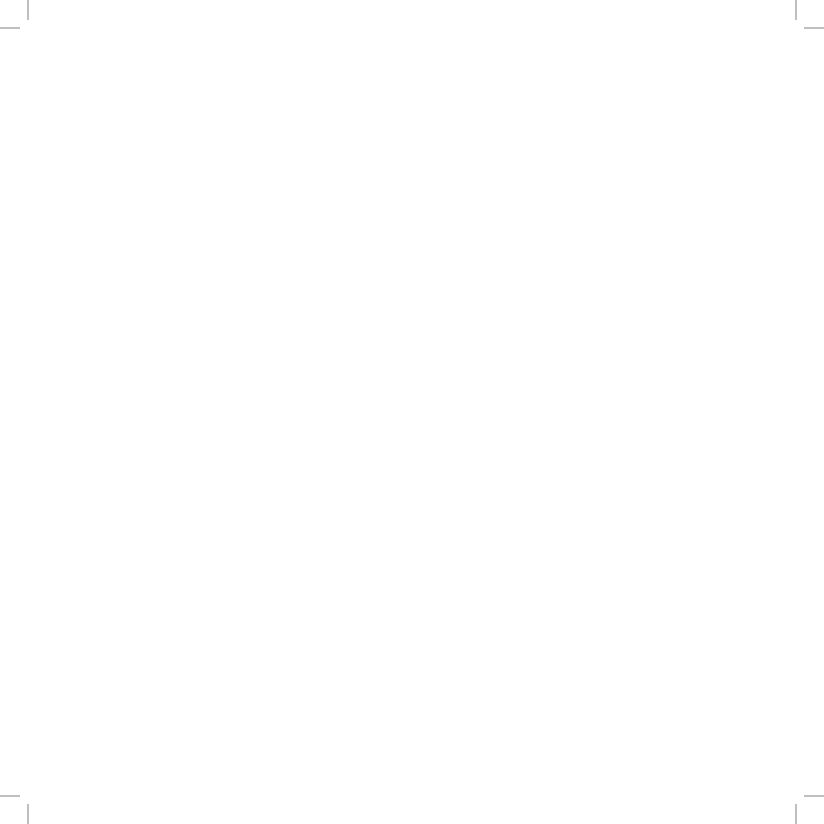
CLIENT SUCCESS: STORIES MATTER





To Cherlyn, who had that power, and with it came her huge heart. Your passion and creativity are imprinted in this piece and represent parts of your legacy to carry forward. This work is a testament to your mission to create opportunities for others and celebrate their success.

Cherlyn Dawn Billy was a member of the Shuswap Nation and spent 25 years working with First Nations, Metis, and Indigenous groups in different capacities. As the first female Chief to be elected for the Bonaparte Indian Band, she dedicated herself to the people, land, and place she called home.



It is an honour to write this tribute to Bernadette Nicholas, a dear friend and colleague. Bernadette was an Employment Counsellor for over 20+ years. She was passionate about her career, committed to her clients, and always supported our team without hesitation. She had a gift of innovative thinking and a visionary spirit.

Bernadette is in our hearts, and we will cherish our memories of her kindness, love, laughter, Bernadette was an amazing person who has played a unique and special role in all our lives.

"Remarkable lady, she helped me with my Commercial Diving course.

She helped so many people over the years." ~ message from client Kyle Mowatt



Tribute To Cherlyn Billy and Bernadette Nicholas

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stories Matter:

A Qualitative Study Reaffirming the Relevance of Case Studies and Stories on Indigenous Skills Employment and Training

The Shuswap Nation Tribal Council Indigenous Skills Employment and Training Program (SNTC ISET) was signed in 2019. Its predecessor was the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy I and II, the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement, and the Regional Bilateral Agreement. The program has been in place since April 1, 1996. Our project will look back at the past 26 years to document a snapshot of the many client successes made possible by this funding.

This booklet documents experiential stories to support the importance of Indigenous programming. Our approach will highlight the power of stories in influencing change and improving capacity. We have highlighted individual success stories and successful partnerships that have benefited individuals and employers.

Case studies and narrative inquiry will merge as a methodological framework to understand processes that explain current realities within employment and broader society. The case study narrative will document experiential stories to support the importance of Indigenous programming, utilizing the cultural significance of First Nations people's oral traditions. "Stories are good at making simple what is complicated. At the same time, some of the complexity is retained because stories are ambiguous and open-ended (Sandberg & Ugelvik, 2016, p. 219)."

The approach will highlight the power of stories, wrapped in a blanket of culture, in influencing change and improving capacity. The background to each story will provide context and a timeline, highlight specific layers and critical events, and explain why the Indigenous Skills Employment and Training Program has been successful and rallied progressive and reactionary social change.

Cherlyn Billy



Shuswap Nation Tribal Council ISET

"Stories Matter"

A success story can document program improvement over time and demonstrate the value of program activities.

- The purpose of the project was to research the SNTC ISET Program and identify stories across various sectors (Adjustments during Covid, Women's Empowerment, Driver's License, Definition and Description of Success, Community Perspectives)
- The data collected through research and interviews were developed to present a set of stories to share best practices, models, and approaches to showcase the broad story of the impact of the ISET program. The stories will, in turn, be used to support other First Nations, Tribal Councils, or organizations who are interested or already in the process of setting up their approaches to documenting the benefits of training, impacts on the social, political, and environmental fabric, and impact of delivery as well as providing suggestions or lessons learned.
- Part of the purpose was to identify the context in telling the story and compare these findings against issues and barriers that were overcome, and employment outcomes obtained. This concerns an individual's context, priorities, and specific needs.
- We spoke to stakeholders to learn more about the success of the ISET Program, the challenges, best practices, aspirations of clients, and successes that were experienced.
- The stories in this report have been shared with the communities we serve. Our main purpose is for other community members to see these success stories as a possibility and encourage and inspire them to take that first step. We can all share in the successes of this program.





Tell us about yourself?

My name is Kyle Mowatt. I come from Hazelton in the Gitxsan territory, and my mother is from Haida Gwaii. When I was 14, my father enrolled me in a scuba diving camp, where I developed a passion for diving. By the time I turned 15, I had already earned my advanced scuba diving certification.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

I was a chef for 13 years, but the pandemic brought uncertainty. My cousin suggested scuba diving, and I sought guidance from Bernadette Nicholas, my Employment Counsellor at the Kamloops ATEC office. She advised me to research and gain more experience in diving. I did lake diving and connected with John Hoden from Ocean Pacifica Adventure. I switched careers at age 31 by registering for training with the Commercial Diving Institute of Canada in Kelowna, BC.

CHALLENGES

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

Although I had applied for band funding for my training, my application was rejected two weeks before the course started. They told me that the training institute was private and not eligible for funding.

At this point, I felt like I was going to fail. I was on Employment Insurance at that time. I called Bernadette and explained that I was denied funding and that my course was scheduled to begin in two weeks. They were able to help me out with funding.

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

With the Covid 19 pandemic, most courses were not happening.
However, my training continued in 2020.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

If it was not for the ISETS funding, I would not be working with Camcor doing work in Aquaculture, spending full-time in the ocean. Because of their support, I am employed full-time and have acquired 1200 hours under my belt in the past two years. There are not many First Nations commercial divers, and it is a new territory to break into.

FUTURE

What's next for you?

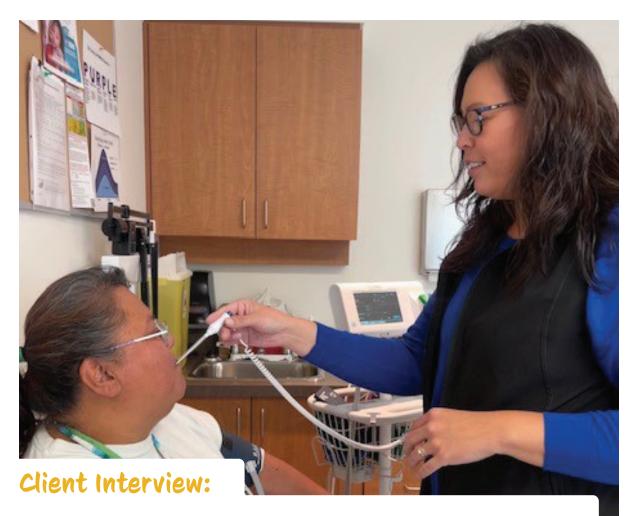
I want to break another barrier and become a hard hat diver and take basic safety training for offshore saturation diving. That way, I can work to a maximum depth of 900 feet. I would also like to take further training to go into atmospheric diving, which is one of the biggest challenges. Water is the best simulation for space and is used to train astronauts, as water has no gravity. I'm training to be a dive supervisor with Camcor Diving Service, which looks amazing!

What else would you like us to know?

A year ago, I had a life-changing experience. I had effects that required me to be rushed to the hospital. I had an issue with tables, which is monitoring the depth and amount of time you can spend underwater and when to resurface. I want to share that divers should watch their tables and treasure them because it could be their last dive. I was fortunate.

Diving is a difficult territory to break into. It is physically demanding, and you need to know your math and physics and the concept of water. You need to follow procedures and need a good head on your shoulders. Diving is an excellent career; we will need more divers in the next five years.





HEIDI BILLY-GREENMAN

Member of Bonaparte First Nation

Tell us about yourself?

In 2016, I decided to take training as a Health Care Aide. I started the Health Care Aide program in Cache Creek through Nicola Valley Institute of Technology with funding secured by SNTC ISET. When I completed that, I worked as a Health Care Aide with Interior Health and the private sector for six years. I wanted to continue my healthcare career as a Licensed Practical Nurse.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

In 2020, I took the Access to Practical Nursing Program at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. When my Band was unable to provide funding and the decision on my application for a student loan did not come in fast enough, I went to the Ashcroft office. It was easy to complete the application process. They navigated the information from NVIT and quickly got me approved.

CHALLENGES

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

I was 39 when I returned to school to take the Licensed Practical Nursing Program. I had to ask myself, "Do I want to do this?

Sometimes I would end up crying. Then, before I knew it, I was doing it. First Nations women can do it. It takes a lot of support from family, and I am lucky my brother worked in the building and told me to get back in there [the classroom] and keep going.

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

Covid 19 was difficult. Many of my courses were online, and we had to rotate in the lab as only six people could be there at a time. We did a community program online with Uganda in Africa, and we were able to watch how they worked.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

The process is easy, and the staff are supportive there. I always point people to the SNTC ISET. They are the backbone of everything and pick up a lot out there. They do not require you to pay back education funding, which is good. I am not coming out of school paying for a debt.

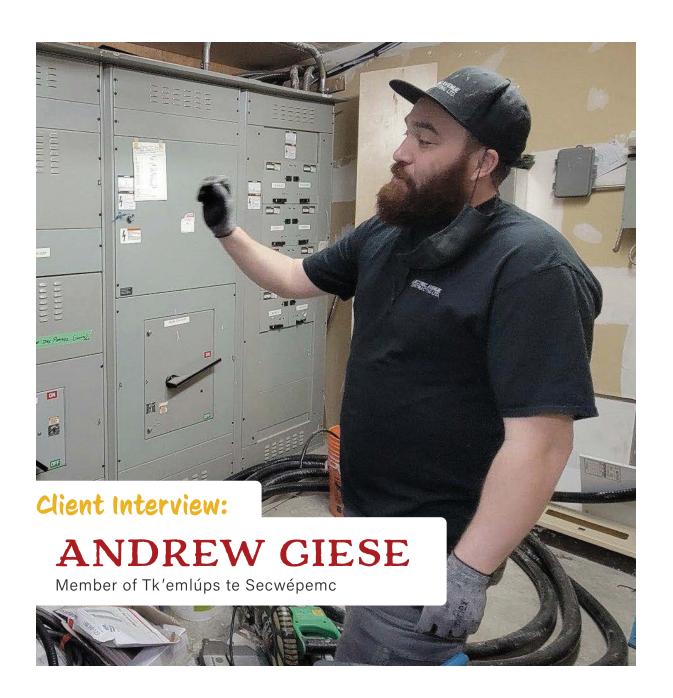
FUTURE

What's next for you?

As the Community Home and Health Nurse, I would like to do more. This may require changing policy, but I am grateful to be a part of the community. There is a lot more support than if I worked in a hospital or long-term care facility. When I get more experience here, I want to do more wound care In the future, my goal is to teach in the Health Care Aide Program. That is the drive.

What else would you like us to know?

I was intimidated walking in to ask for help. The first step was difficult, but it was easy to navigate when I did it. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



O

Tell us about yourself?

I went through the Kamloops office ten years ago in 2012 to start my apprentice program. I did a couple of jobs in trades and ended up on Employment Insurance for a year. I met Bernadette Nicholas, Employment Counsellor, who helped me get started in the Pre-Apprenticeship Electrical Program. SNTC ISET paid for my schooling for a year. I got top marks and carried on completing my journeyman certification. In 2019, I started my own business, "Electric Avenue," specializing in commercial, residential, and light industrial.

Q

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

When I visited the Kamloops office, I was highly motivated. I was still young, and their office proved to be extremely helpful in guiding me through school and providing me with funding support. I decided to pursue my dream of becoming an electrician when I was 24. Being surrounded by 19-year-olds in my program was overwhelming, but I persevered. Interestingly, I recently hired someone who also received funding for electrician training from SNTC ISET. It was a surreal moment when I realized I had come full circle with the Kamloops office.

CHALLENGES

Q

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

Before I went back to school, I was building water tanks and travelling throughout Alberta. I did this for five years, travelling around, living in hotels, and doing labour jobs. When I got laid off, it allowed me to think about what I wanted. I chose a career where I work in town and close to home. It would be best if you took the time to find your niche and find out what you like and don't like.

O

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

The Pandemic was good for my trade. People were stuck in their houses and started renovating. There were a lot of home improvements during that time. I had five employees and started jobs I could get materials for. I knew there would be a shortage of materials, and I was able to stock up before everything was delayed. During Covid, I also worked part-time at Thompson Rivers University with Heather Hamilton. I instructed a trades sampler course with Indigenous Students at Canim Lake, BC.

O

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

The Kamloops office made it easy. The first step is the hard part. It isn't very safe when setting yourself up for your future. If you can make it happen, you have to take the first step. If you are motivated, SNTC ISET makes it easy.

FUTURE



What's next for you?

I have not had much time off this year, so I am due for a vacation once I wrap up my current project. I would love to continue to teach if I have time.



What else would you like us to know?

I would like to retire and work as an Electrical Safety Officer, but this is a long way off.



CHALLENGES

FUTURE

Tell us about yourself?

I am a 19-year-old female who does what she loves and can do what I enjoy every day.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

I came to Ashcroft to ask if there was a job I could get high school credit for graduation. My Employment Counsellor Ashlene referred me to Quinn at Charles Ranch Equine. I worked there for eight months as a Horse Barn Assistant to a Horse Veterinarian specializing in reproduction and performance horse medicine. I helped with all aspects, including learning about breeding horses and caring for foals. The company negotiated a Targeted Wage Subsidy (TWS) with SNTC ISET to employ me as a trainee Barn Assistant.

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

I am gaining experience and learning about opportunities for my future. As a young person, I am still learning from those around me and letting each experience move me in the direction I am meant to be go.

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

Initially, I worked an outdoor job, but later, I returned to the Ashcroft office seeking help to find a position aligned with my interests. Ashlene assisted me in exploring my options and directed me toward a job at the Bonaparte First Nation. I began my role as a Field Technician on May 2, 2022. My duties include walking fire guards, monitoring archaeological sites, and working in forestry and fisheries. I'm also learning to operate the skid steer.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

ISET services can provide various opportunities and has let me decide where I fit in best.

What's next for you?

I have a passion for working with running heavy equipment, and I am eager to pursue a career in that field.

What else would you like us to know?

If given the choice, I would work on a ranch 24/7. However, the compensation is not equivalent.

"We had an excellent experience partnering with the SNTC ISET program in 2021. Our working student was Gracie Antoine, who was not only knowledgeable in the position of Breeding Barn Assistant, but she was also willing to learn and easily fit in with the team. The SNTC ISET staff were supportive and helpful during the application process and the reporting period. I would highly recommend engaging with the SNTC ISET program."

~ Arna Gavaga, General Manager, Charles Ranch Equine



CHALLENGES

FUTURE

O

Tell us about yourself?

I completed a dual credit program with Thompson Rivers University during my senior year of high school. This enabled me to graduate high school in 2011 with a Health Care Assistant (HCA) certification. I have been working with Q'wemtsín Health Society (QHS) ever since. I'm very passionate about my work and the communities that QHS serves.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

Since my youth, I have always appreciated the support of SNTC ISET. I have received help in driver's education and the arrangements for my HCA practicum with QHS. More recently, SNTC ISET has supported my professional development by assisting me with funding for enrollment in the Human Resources (HR) Management certificate program with Simon Fraser University.

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

After graduating from Thompson degree in Psychology and English, I started working as an HCA but later transitioned to administrative work due to pregnancy. I excelled in my duties and was promoted to Community Wellness Champion in 2018. In 2021, I applied for the HR Manager position despite needing formal HR training. I researched HR training programs and sought support from SNTC ISET to further my professional development. Despite childcare challenges, I secured the position and am now the HR Manager at QHS, one step closer to my goal of becoming Health Director.

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

When the COVID-19 pandemic was announced, I felt a lot of fear for the safety of my family, and I recall sharing this concern with my director. I have always been supported by QHS and was relieved that my work could be accommodated remotely. Throughout the pandemic, much of my work was completed remotely or in a way that could accommodate social distancing, and I'm grateful to have had that opportunity.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

I highly encourage people to seek support from SNTC ISET. It's a great resource, and I'm sure there are people out there who would qualify for services but aren't accessing them for various reasons. Take the leap and commit to your education; it's not something you'll regret.

What's next for you?

I have been the HR Manager with QHS for over two years, and it has been a fantastic experience. I have completed my training with Simon Fraser University and am now enrolled in the Post-Baccalaureate Diploma program at Thompson Rivers University, specializing in Human Resources. In the meantime, I will continue to work as an HR Manager to build the experience necessary to qualify for the Chartered Professionals of Human Resources (CPHR) designation.



Tell us about yourself?

I started working at Sanderson Garage when I was 13 years old. Since then, I have worked for the railroad. highways, and fisheries for Lytton First Nation. I have been the relief janitor, bookkeeper, receptionist, executive assistant to the Chief and Council, logger, truck driver, human resource manager, and acting administrator. Now, I am the Implementation Manager, After seven years of entrepreneurship, I returned to Cariboo College, now Thompson Rivers University, for my Bachelor's in Business Administration, with a Major in Marketing and a Minor in Human Resource Management. I planned to qualify for a business loan, start my own business and surround myself with like-minded people.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

I was introduced to SNTC ISET on my last trip to TRU in the summer of 2015. I was hired by LFN funded by SNTC ISET, as the Assistant Human Resource Manager, and my first job was to hire and supervise 21 other SNTC ISET-funded summer students. The following year, 2016, LFN hired me as the Human Resource Manager. I have applied for Targeted Wage Subsidy for several projects and helped our Fuel Management Crews apply for PPE. I also help other department managers apply for funding. This year, we are applying for a Direct Purchase for Leadership/Management training and a Retail Employee Readiness Program.

CHALLENGES

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

I returned to school at a reasonably ripe age; sometimes, I was the oldest person in the classroom, including the Professor. Living in Kamloops was very different from living on reserve in Lytton. Every month, making ends meet was challenging, so I took a newspaper (Globe & Mail) delivery job. I would get up at 4 am, pick up the papers and deliver them despite rain, snow and dogs. The last few semesters were the most challenging, and I wanted to give up, but my partner quit her school bus driver job and moved to Kamloops with me. I couldn't have made it without her support.

How did you navigate the Covid 19 pandemic?

On March 19, 2020, we were asked to work from home due to office closure, and the days seemed endless after transitioning to virtual meetings.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

I appreciate the services SNTC ISET brings. I have attended community forum sessions and used their services. I encourage managers to use the program when hiring new employees to offset costs. Since people must travel more distance to Lytton to work, we start everyone at \$20.00 per hour. The minimum wage offered helps us with the cost of hiring people who may require equipment and training for employment.

FUTURE

What's next for you?

Initially, I planned to qualify for a business loan, make a profit, sell, and move on to my next opportunity. However, as I've become more entrenched in my work, I've realized the importance of having a succession plan. Every position within the organization should have one. It's necessary to build up our internal capacity. In Lytton, most managers are band members - 11 out of 13, to be exact. We can grow and evolve within our roles. Many of us were hired as assistants and worked up to our current positions. We are all motivated to take on new challenges and continue to develop our skills.



Tell us about yourself?

My name is Devin Doss; I am from the St'at'imc Nation (Lillooet, BC); I reside in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops BC). I moved from my community to attend Thompson Rivers University and was re-introduced to ISET over the summer.

Tell us about your ISET program experience?

In 2012, I enrolled in a six-week program that TD Bank and the Kamloops office hosted. During the program, I learned different communication styles, how to build a resume, and how to work with people from diverse backgrounds and needs. After completing the program, I secured a position as a Client Advisor with RBC.

CHALLENGES

What steps did you take to tackle challenges & barriers?

SNTC ISET was a great bridge learning about what skills and requirements are in demand in the workplace. The program gave me the insight I needed to push my career forward and understand what I needed to be successful. With globalization and a growing workforce, I learned to challenge myself and remain competitive to excel. I treated every job I had as an opportunity and made it my goal to obtain the transferable skills to advance and succeed.

How did coming to SNTC ISET support you?

Initially, the Kamloops office supported me by providing a shared workspace where I could access a computer and printer. They also helped me through their mentorship and connecting me with current career opportunities. Transitioning into the workforce made me appreciate how transferable skills and short-term opportunities can benefit me. I learned how to tailor my transferable skills, highlight them on my resume, and apply them to opportunities for advancement.

FUTURE

What's next for you?

Over the summer, I have had the opportunity to work with a Government Secretariat. Most recently, I spoke about my experience on a youth panel hosted by the BCAFN. Attending the BCAFN was a rewarding experience as it allowed me to network with my peers. Learning how First Nations youth serve their communities and the challenges we share was inspiring. My biggest takeaway is to uphold today's youth, as they are the leaders of tomorrow. I am proud of my connections across the Nation; I know we will eventually cross paths.

What else would you like us to know?

After obtaining my Business
Administration and Commerce
Diploma, I am continuing to pursue my
degree. In applying what I learned from
university, I'm currently venturing on a
career path that responds to building
meaningful relationships between
Indigenous and non-Indigenous
communities. With the implementation
of DRIPA (Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples Act), I'm optimistic
for my future, my community, and all
nations' future.



Partner Organization Interview:

ARROW TRANSPORTATION
LISA SAVAGE
ARROW

Can you describe the present/past joint programs with ISET?

In 2017, Arrow Transportation
Systems Inc., SNTC ISET, and the
Columbia Driving School collaborated to
create the 'Arrow Transportation Systems
Inc. and Indigenous Peoples Driver
Training Program. This program provided
complete funding to the Indigenous
Community for those who wanted to
pursue a career as a professional truck
driver, and it concluded with employment
opportunities at Arrow as a truck driver.

What are/were the goals of the program?

The goal is to provide the necessary training to Indigenous members to obtain their Class 1 license and embark on a rewarding career in the Transportation Industry. We believe that a start as a Truck Driver offers anyone a 'Job for Life' and is also an entry point to various other careers within the Transportation Industry. For example, one of our successful students, James, quickly became a certified driver mentor and mentored other Indigenous Peoples new to the driving profession.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

What are some of the challenges faced?

The greatest challenge for Arrow and the Industry is that trucking requires working exceptionally long hours and various shifts, which doesn't work for everyone. Also, our trucks are some of the longest and heaviest on the road, and we haul in mountainous terrain on some of the steepest grades in Canada. Moving in the wintertime can also be a challenge for a new driver as conditions on the Coquihalla, Highway 1 and various other highways in the province can be unforgiving. A different challenge for the more recent driver is backing up a 2-trailer configuration in some very tight spots.

What steps do you think need to be taken to avoid such challenges/barriers in the future?

Arrow is currently working with a team through Trucking HR Canada to develop an Industry Standard for an effective 'Driver Finishing' program for the newer truck driver. As such, improvements will be made to the way in which we think about training the more recent driver towards success, no matter the equipment, commodity, or terrain. We believe this enhanced program will lend itself to improvements to the training methodology, the Driver Mentor's understanding of how to support a newer driver most effectively, and ultimately cultivate a greater sense of confidence in the student.

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE

Is there potential for more partnership opportunities? If so, what do you think it needs to be successful?

We are currently working with Ttes on a new model. We had a chance to meet with eight students and provide them with a tour, the opportunity for Q&A, and 'ride-a-longs' for those potentially interested in a career with us. We look forward to hearing the outcomes of this pilot and hope to be partners in this program for years to come.



Partner Organization Interview:

FIRST NATION FORESTRY COUNCIL DENISE GALLANT

OUTCOMES

What were the outcomes that demonstrated how the program addressed the problem?

Strong client support equates to more successful students and a higher completion rate. The Workforce Strategy calls to action will fill 2200 forestry jobs by 2027.

Share how the SNTC ISET partnership benefited your organization and the communities?

Having a person for clients to connect with in their region and having good communication with the client and with FNFC helps to ensure that clients are successful and staying on track with education goals.

COVID-19 Pandemic, Emergency Events

During COVID isolation, the importance of in-person interactions and support became evident. Students struggled with isolation and online learning, making the SNTC ISET partnership crucial.

Do you foresee any future cost components arising due to ongoing issues.

Emergency events increased tuition, rentals, and food costs, and without SNTC ISET filling funding gaps, we wouldn't be able to support as many students.

DESCRIPTION

Can you identify who was involved with your project?

FNFC and other partners include ISET and Industry.

Can you describe the program/activity that was implemented, including where and when it took place and how it addressed the problem?

Indigenous Forestry Scholarship
Program (IFSP) was formed in 2012,
starting with the province supporting 5
students annually, and has grown to 7
partners with 35 scholarships annually.
The goal is 50 scholarships annually.

Can you identify the target audience of the program or activity?

First Nation students and jobseekers.

How was the progress of the program evaluated?

Success is measured by the number of graduates, and paid work placements and mentorships completed...

How did the SNTC ISET funding, support, or services contribute to the program?

Supporting clients with referrals and providing access to overlooked benefits with a regional face-to-face connection to the community.

OVERVIEW

Where have you seen success with the SNTC ISET programs?

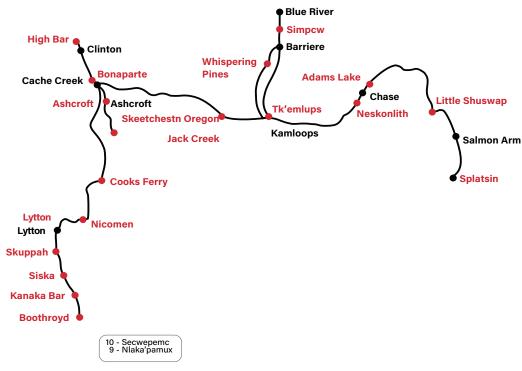
FNFC stresses the importance of providing excellent customer service and attracting highly qualified talent through effective recruitment strategies.

Can you describe the problem, challenge or issue the program addresses?

FNFC workforce strategy areas are addressed, especially -wellness health and safety- for scholarship clients and recruitment of scholarship clients. Assistance with driver's licenses for clients before enrolling in our program. Thirty-three SNTC ISET clients completed the program to date. There were wrap-around supports before, during, and after training.

About Us

The Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (SNTC) is the Secwépemc and Nlaka'pamux Nations ISET agreement holder. It works on matters of common concern, including the development of self- government and the settlement of the aboriginal land title question. The SNTC also provides technical support to member communities to improve services in health, child welfare, employment and training, research on traditional territories, and community development. It carries out activities, wherever possible, in cooperation with non-member Shuswap Bands and, in all circumstances, without prejudice to their rights and interests.



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