

# A BRIEF SUMMARY ON PROJECT SHARING MEETING

*For*

## *Manitoba Youth Forum*



Neighborhood Empowerment and Resource Centre (NEARC Inc.)



In Partnership With



Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres (MAC)

**MARCH 16, 2018**

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*“The Worst Reconciliation is Better than Best Divorce”*

*- Miguel De Cervantes*

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**Introduction:** Neighborhood Empowerment and Resource Centre (NEARC Inc.) initially developed the concept of **Manitoba Youth Forum (MYF)** after rigorous consultations with youths and leaders from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, stakeholders, and various other organizational partners including representatives of National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Most importantly, the Director of Youth Agencies Alliance (YAA), Karen Ferris’s role was instrumental in bringing and shaping this concept to this level. NEARC played key role in bringing the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres (MAC) as an Indigenous Partner and will be responsible in managing issues related to project-related Indigenous issues including management and recruitment of Indigenous participants. If approved by the Canada Service Corps, we are planning to launch this Forum as a pilot-project to continue until the end of the March 2020 from the date of approval of funding.

NEARC Inc. is a Winnipeg-based newcomer-youth serving not-for-profit organization. It demonstrated its innate skills to work and engage with newcomer youths through projects of varying scales in a very short period. It is working towards integration and assimilation of newcomer youths through innovative and practical approaches such as; Youth Unites! and Students Unite! with various organizational partners, two designated schools of the Winnipeg School Division, funders, employers and some generous individuals.

Thus, in partnership with the MAC and various other collaborators, NEARC Inc. has developed the pilot project, Manitoba Youth Forum (MYF). Our prime objective is to reconcile the new-comer youth groups with Indigenous youth groups by adopting some well-thought activities and making them ready for the job market. Through reconciling newcomer youths and Championing TRC Calls to Action # 93, we endeavor to engage, educate, empower, reconcile, and employ newcomer and Indigenous youths in Winnipeg.



**Consultation Process:** To test the ground reality, NEARC Inc. in partnership with the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centre on March 16, Friday, 2018 hosted a Project Sharing Meeting for the Pilot Project, Manitoba Youth Forum. The main purpose of the Project Sharing Meeting was to seek valuable inputs for the Pilot Project, Manitoba Youth Forum and for further refining the relevant concepts and developing *modus operandi*. In order to make it a successful and replicable project across Manitoba. One of the main purpose of this meeting is to learn and pull together inputs from your experience, leadership, volunteerism, and community empowerment philosophy with a view to better shape MYF. NEARC could draw upon ideas from extensive sectoral expertise and generational knowledge. We do strongly believe in cooperation and sharing.

During this event, Indigenous and non-Indigenous community leaders and various organizational partners including representatives from the National Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) were present. The event was attended by diverse group of peoples including the MP of our area Mr. Robert Ouellette Falcon. NEARC and MAC received overwhelming response from the invitees.



Co-Facilitators of the Project Sharing Meeting Mr. Ron Brown and Abdikheir Ahmed during the event

## Summary of the Findings:

Participants were divided and provided four breakout sessions and four questions were provided and each group was asked to deal one question. The questions were:

### **1.What are the major Indigenous challenges that newcomer youths need to know about for having a better understanding of Canadian Indigenous history and culture?**

Indigenous youths need to know that they have to proceed forward, and they have indeed little choice of their own left out. They need to understand the sufferings of intergenerational trauma and intergenerational wisdom on how their forefathers survived through exercising resilience. Every newcomer youth should know about the Indigenous culture, history, and way of life. They should also learn about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its 94 Calls to Action and in particular. Specifically, 'Call to Action #93- Newcomers to Canada' recommends revising the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

It was shared that our generation did not cause this, but we are the ones that can fix it, and find out ways to come out of the cycle of psychological stresses and trauma. The TRC acknowledges differences between what students learn in schools and true history that is passed down from our elders. Newcomers need more education.

### **2.What resources and/or skills/knowledge are important to develop harmony between newcomer and Indigenous youths while building strong relationships?**

There should be youth peace camp, good role models, newcomer and Indigenous leadership opportunities, cross-cultural programs, sports events, qualitative research on each other's culture, and photo-voice. Peer leaders, artists should be promoted. Youths should have a better presentation of their generations. Often youths need to explore the positive aspects of each group. Empathy, confidence, patience, and safe space are needed to bring both communities together. Further, we need to figure out ways to dispel myths about each other. Safe and supportive ways of expressing the trauma Indigenous youths have experienced and sharing their stories would go a long way. Creation of curriculum that supports the conversations for both communities and focus on success and resilience as common to both is critically needed. Sharing of Indigenous practices-dance, pow-wow, smudge and other traditional ceremonies is fundamental to upbringing cultural values. Visiting each other's spaces, learning ways of life, and hearing other's stories would have tremendous positive impacts on bridging social networks.

**3. What could be some of the activities that would enhance understanding on the Canadian Workplace Culture for newcomer youth and bring newcomer and indigenous youth together?**

Educating about workplaces, colonization of workplace culture, and providing basic orientation on workplace safety and health are some pertinent themes. Career mentorship opportunity, paid placements, and understanding their rights and helping to understand various norms of the changing workplaces are deemed very important. Newcomer and Indigenous youths should be paired with community leaders, where there is no such representation. We need to teach both youths about their rights and how to work together to advocate and protect themselves in the workplace.

**4. What would be your best hope of this project in the next 3-5 years?**

More consultations and youth engagements, joint gatherings while sharing food, culture, and sports activities are critical. Creation of youth-friendly curriculum and developing leadership from each group is significant. We need to take steps to develop youth engagement strategy, take advantage of social media and growing technology. We have to plan for creating sustainable projects/processes that develop a healthy relationship with Indigenous and newcomer youths supported through our partnership developed through this consultation process. Youth can help shape future of this country and there is no doubt that they can together change the World. Together, these youths can be instrumental to restore the right relationship and promote peace and harmony across societies and throughout the country. We need to grow and expand such programs across the Province. Mutually agreed actions that harvest and build upon respect and diversity in our communities are of critical importance.



Mr. Damon Johnston, President & CEO of Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, during the Project Sharing Meeting

The Co-facilitators (Mr. Ron Brown, President & CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs and Mr. Abdikheir Ahmed, Director, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg) were instrumental in mobilizing the breakout sessions and getting the collective responses. Based on the response and feedback given during the Project Sharing Meeting, we received some great suggestions, and commitment to support the project from their own level.



**Co-Facilitator, Mr. Ron Brown checks one of the group during the breakout sessions**

In a province such as ours where there is a significant Indigenous population, and a growing newcomer population, we need to focus on reducing stereotypes and myths about each other. We believe that initiatives like the Manitoba Youth Forum will promote harmonious relationships while attempting to reduce barriers, working as a bridge between two communities.

The NEARC Inc. in collaboration with its Indigenous Partner Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres (MAC) is working on the final phase of the proposal.

**Testimony from a participant:** "First of all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for making us all feel important in the event. First, the food is good, but your humble nature moved all of us in the room. I would like to share with you that my husband has been a referee for 25 years with WMBA and all Filipino basketball leagues. He has been running and coordinating kids, youth, and adult basketball events on an annual basis. If you need some ideas or help in anything, please feel free to contact me. I already mentioned to my husband about your organization and that his help or ideas might be needed to help you with some of your activities. All the best to you and your organization."



**Robert Falcon, MP of the West Central twitted about the Manitoba Youth Forum.**

"I was happy to attend and very much enjoyed the interaction and the food. You may use my photo. Please let me know what I can do to help. I am only an email away. Also my cell is 204-123-1234, should you need it. Thanks!"

# Neighborhood Empowerment & Resource Centre (NEARC) Inc.

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## MEETING AGENDA

MEETING DETAIL	LOGISTICS
<b>PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE</b> To Seek Inputs for the pilot project, <b>Manitoba Youth Forum (MYF)</b> <b>Collaborative Partner:</b> Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres	<b>DATE</b> : Friday, March 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 <b>TIME</b> : 5:00pm until 6:30 pm CST <b>VENUE:</b> 90 Sinclair Street, Seniors Room <b>PARKING:</b> Front of the Building, if occupied, street parking available <b>MEETING SETTING:</b> Sharing Circle
<b>FACILITATION</b> Co-Facilitated by Mr. Ron Brown & Mr. Abdikheir Ahmed	

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| 1. Meet & Greet with Dinner                               | 5:00 pm            |
| 2. Introductions followed by Prayers                      | 5:00 pm to 5:20 pm |
| 3. Welcome Remarks by:                                    |                    |
| a) Dr. Hom Gartaula, President of NEARC Inc               | 5:20 pm to 5:25    |
| b) Mr. Ryan Paradis, Executive Director of MAC            | 5:20 pm to 5:25    |
| 4. Purpose of the Meeting by Dr. Hom Gartaula             | 5:25 pm to 5:35    |
| 5. Moderated by Facilitators                              | 5:35 pm to 6:25 pm |
| 6. Closing Remarks by Mr. Bijaya Pokharel, ED, NEARC Inc. | 6:25               |