

## **Gabriel Dumont Institute**

Jurisdiction: Saskatchewan

Contact: Larry G. Ahenakew

Level: Adult Learning

Theme: Organisational/Structural

### Description of Practice:

Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) has the important role and mandate of providing educational and cultural services to Saskatchewan Métis people. This is done on several fronts. The one front is the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). This program is set up to provide university training in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, for students to become teachers. Another is Dumont Technical Institute (DTI). This program provides basic education and skills training. GDI also has a publishing program '*Expressing our Heritage*'. The publishing program produces Métis specific materials.

### Background:

GDI was incorporated as a non profit corporation in 1980. The institute is set up as the official arm of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. GDI is a Métis directed educational and cultural entity which makes it unique in Canada. There was a need identified in the area of Métis and First Nations teachers. A growing population in the province of First Nations and Métis people required that teacher training programming become a priority. Through more than two and a half decades the institute's mission has always been to promote the renewal and development of First Nations and Métis cultures. Although the institute has offices in several locations in the province, programming is delivered to wherever the need is in Métis communities across the province. DTI, which is the institute's adult upgrading arm, delivers programs in cooperation with other educational partners. These programs address identified needs of many Métis people who wanted upgrading and training programs.

### Development:

GDI was developed as a result of an identified need by members of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Members of the political arm of the Métis Nation, along with identified members of the Métis public were selected to sit on a board of governors. These governors in turn determined what the programs would be and set about the task of making the necessary partnerships to allow for the evolution of the programs. For the program of teacher education (SUNTEP) to be successful, three centres of excellence were created in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. Each of these centres offers a fully accredited four year Bachelor of Education program. The program is designed to meet the educational needs of Métis students as well as address the strong need for trained and qualified Métis educators. In the case of DTI, adult upgrading is being offered in various Métis settled communities across the province.

The publishing program *Expressing our Heritage* continues to lead the country in the production of Métis specific resources.

Evidence:

The SUNTEP program of GDI has been very successful in a number of ways. There are now over 500 graduates of the program that are teaching in various school divisions within our province.

In the fiscal year of 2003-2004, DTI provided over 500 learning opportunities for Saskatchewan Métis people. The areas of Practical Nursing, trades training, and Basic Education continue to be DTI's priorities.

GDI's publishing program *Expressing our Heritage* has been recognized by the Saskatchewan Book Awards, it has won two awards in two categories, *First People's Publishing* and *Publishing in Education*. This type of evidence really speaks to the commitment that the board of directors and their staff have toward the success of GDI.

Adaptability:

There is an adaptability of the program in other areas as long as there is a willingness for governments to work together. There is a need for other Métis and First Nations peoples to take advantage of Métis and First Nations operated teacher training programs along with the other programming that GDI has been able to undertake and promote. To date there are a number of Métis and First Nations programs that enable Métis and First Nations students to benefit in their pursuit of higher education.

Further information:

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For further information on Gabriel Dumont Institute please go to [www.gdins.org](http://www.gdins.org) .