FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (FNQLEDC)

NIKAN

ENSURING THE VISIBILITY OF THE ABENAKI NATION AND ITS ENTERPRISES

Wôlinak and Odanak are small communities, but still, together, they have over thirty enterprises, in addition to an industrial park. To make their business known and to foster the development of their business, the community economic development officer, Stéphane Lecours-Aubin, in cooperation with his colleagues of Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki (GCNWA), implemented a number of very specific actions.

The business "Fromagerie Odanak".

Photo: FNQLEDC

To guide his actions and his work, Stéphane Lecours-Aubin, can rely on a five-year Strategic Plan, which includes various objectives to be attained, based on five main axes. These axes are quite diversified and they come under the form of support to community promoters and entrepreneurs, launching of a promotional strategy to enhance the Abenaki entrepreneurial culture and promotion and ensure the visibility of the industrial park. Here are three concrete actions that have been implemented to meet these three axes.

PROMOTING THE INDUSTRIAL PARK OF ODANAK

Conseil des Abénakis d'Odanak (CAO) has had its own industrial park since 2018; this park is located along route 132. Phase 1, which has been built a few years ago, has become the actual Institution Kiuna. As for Phase II, it includes six rental spaces and it covers a total area of 6 000 square feet. The motel makes its rental spaces available to enterprises; dimensions vary according to needs. Presently, the industrial motel houses a gym, a general

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mechanic workshop and an ICT hosting company. These three companies occupy five of the six spaces available, leaving one vacant space of 1 000 square feet, which is currently up for rent. The CAO also wishes to develop the industrial motel and in a very near future, development phases will make it possible to create new rental spaces, in a form that meets the needs of interested promoters.

To promote the current and forthcoming spaces, Stéphane Aubin-Lecours did researches on the Web for specialized platforms on which the industrial park could be advertised on line, other than the traditional sites, such as LesPac and Kijiji. This led him to discover the *Canada Industrial Parks Directory*. This directory is used for recording an industrial park and subsequently, the users can make a research starting with criteria such as the city, the region, the province, the surface, etc. One interesting fact is that registration costs 175 $ annually, but for the CEDOs, registration is free!

THE ABENAKI IN BUSINESS

Stéphane has put in place a promotional tool, *Abénakis en affaires*. It helps publicize the Abenaki businesses in an original way, while showing the economic vitality of the two communities. *Abénakis en affaires* consists of making publicity portraitures of enterprises, artisans or artists from one or the other of these two communities. These profiles are then posted on Facebook and on the Websites of the two communities, which allows each publishing to reach about 3 000 people. For enterprises that have been in business for a few years already, he is trying to present in his publications new information on enterprises that people are unaware of. He makes every effort to publish the profiles at the right time, for example, he will not post the portrait of a dairy bar in the middle of winter, but rather at the beginning of summer, when the days are warmer. Profiles are gaining visibility, because now, when he contacts an enterprise for information, business owners know what it's all about when they talk about *Abénakis en affaires* and they are interested in being part of it.

One of the publications "Abenaki in Business".

NETWORKING TO HELP CREATE BUSINESS LINKAGES

In order to establish relations with people or businesses with whom a partnership could be possible, the CEDO also participates in networking activities organized in the cities near Odanak and Wôlinak. Participating in such work requires time, but at the same time, it's an opportunity to build good neighbourly relations and raise awareness of key resources that could be called upon to intervene in the development or advancement of a project.

Ultimately, all these measures are aimed at encouraging people to use the services offered by the Abenaki enterprises, in addition to strengthening the incentive for new businesses to come and establish themselves on Abenaki territory. This economic stimulus activity is intended to create jobs for community members.

Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki
A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

In the past few years, the Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki (GCNWA) has developed a wide range of services which include a variety of technical services, territorial consultation services, social services, etc.

Services provided by the GCNWA are not exclusive to the communities of Wôlinak and Odanak. In fact, the communities of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag, Rapid Lake and Kanesatake use our services on a regular basis. One of the important benefits offered by the GCNWA to its clientele is its knowledge of the First Nations environment and its regulation. This knowledge allows them to carry out work while giving consideration to the environment, the culture and the values of the communities.

In 2017-2018, all contracted services enabled the GCNWA to achieve revenues of 8 M$. Given that it's a non-profit organization, all profits then made are reinvested in its operations and in the two Abenaki communities. Following is an overview of services offered by the two main departments of the GCNWA.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Technical Services Department offers services in municipal engineering, architecture, building mechanics, construction supervision, etc. Communities may also call upon their services for constructing buildings. Recently, they have built a school in Listuguj and they will soon start working on a large contract in the Mohawk community of Kanesatake. The technical services team also traveled to Kahnawake to inspect buildings, and occasionally, they get contracts from cities and municipalities in Quebec.

The new building of the Conseil des Abénakis d'Odanak was built by the technical services team of GCNWA who was also able to manage the construction project.

Photo: FNQLEDC

NDAKINNA OFFICE

The Ndakinna Office is the department of territorial consultations of the GCNWA. Initially, it was created to manage the various consultation requests the GCNWA receives annually. In its first year of activities, the department had only one employee, compared to now, with a team of 10 staff persons. In addition to territorial consultations, Ndakinna Office offers archeological services, which enable them to get contracts from Parks Canada. With all this going on, the Ndakinna Office generates approximately 1 M$ in revenues every year.

Other departments of the GCNWA are also very active, such as the First Nations Child and Family Services, a program that provides support to communities in the area of social aid. In summary, the service delivery of the GCNWA is well developed and at the moment, contracts are being refused, not because of lack of expertise, but rather because of lack of workspaces in its offices of Wôlinak. To remedy the situation, an extension will soon be built.

Further information on the Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki can be found at gcnwa.com

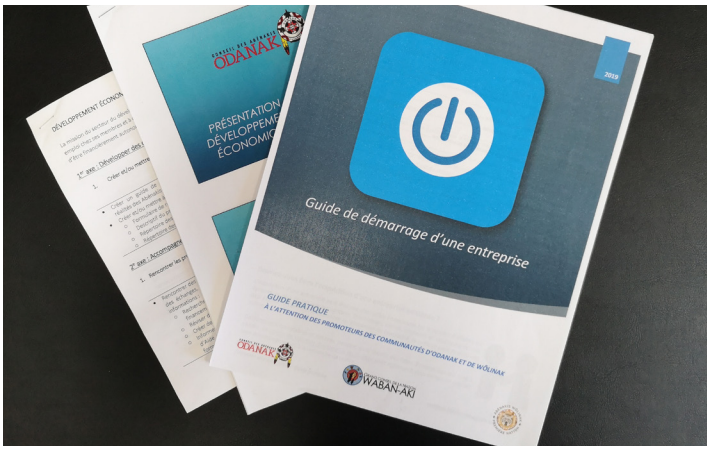
AS A NEW CEDO, HAVING THE RIGHT TOOLS IS KEY

Stéphane Lecours-Aubin stepped into position as a Community Economic Development Officer (CEDO) in the fall of 2018. Formally trained as a Human Resources Advisor, the economic development sector was totally new to him. That being said, he had to seek out the right tools for the job in order to support Wôlinak and Odanak entrepreneurs. Based upon his experience and with his collaboration, you will find below, a few tricks that may be useful to other newly appointed CEDOs.

From the outset, the two essential elements for Mr. Lecours-Aubin in his work were to be able to listen to people and offer personalized services. To achieve these two objectives, he needed to be equipped with a toolbox chockfull of the right tools and resources to be efficient. Therefore, during his first weeks in position, he drafted a form with diverse categories to be completed when meeting an entrepreneur. This form helps him note all the invaluable information that is required (i.e. name, community, academic and professional portfolio, the type of project the individual is looking to achieve, corporate structure, the needs of the individual, etc.). Thereafter, he asks the entrepreneur to complete another document in which the latter must present a summary of his business project and products and or services to be offered. All this pertinent information enables him to provide support with an approach that is personalized and tailored to the needs of any given entrepreneur.

A further tool developed by Mr. Lecours-Aubin is a list of different key resources and organizations (Indigenous and not) that he or an entrepreneur can call upon throughout the process based on the nature of the project. Similarly, in order to be on top of everything that's happening in terms of First Nations (communities and organizations), he spent some time on Facebook to identify and "Like" the pages that are most pertinent to his work. Therefore, by regularly scrolling through his "Feed", in just a few minutes he's able to strategically and efficiently monitor the relevant medias. Incidentally, he also took the time to directly speak, whether by telephone or in person, with advisors or representatives of some of these organizations in order to be up to speed on their service offerings and to broaden his network.

Lastly, the Internet also being an invaluable tool, Mr. Lecours-Aubin searched the Web on the basis of developing a business start up guide that includes tests, and information and tools on various themes (i.e. business project validation, needs in terms of training, creating a market study, legal structures of a company, etc.).



As you can see, this is just a snapshot of everything that was developed. These tools and information are great assets that allow Mr. Lecours-Aubin to provide custom tailored support to Wôlinak and Odanak entrepreneurs that come to him for help. Any other CEDO from another community could easily be inspired by this "toolbox" to create content that is adapted to his or her own context.

For tools that have been developed by the FNQLEDC, don't hesitate to visit the "Toolbox" section of our new website at cdepnql.org

FNQLEDC SERVICES FOR NEW CEDOs

You're a new CEDO or thinking of hiring a CEDO shortly? Once our Economic Development Advisor is advised of a newly appointed CEDO, he quickly contacts the individual to plan a telephone call or a meeting wherein he will present all the services offered by the FNQLEDC. He takes the necessary time to get to know the person and identify his or her needs. In the following days, the Advisor provides the new CEDO with the "CEDO Toolbox" which has been developed by the FNQLEDC and is designed to provide assistance presented in the form of a newsletter. The content of this document is specifically adapted to accommodate CEDO needs (i.e. tools, trainings, etc.). Throughout the year, our Economic Development Advisor communicates with CEDOs and also meets with them on a couple of occasions in their community or during events and other related meetings. Additionally, the FNQLEDC can help you from the start in the hiring process of a new CEDO, whether with supplying you with examples of task descriptions or by taking part in the selection committees.

A FIRST VITALLY IMPORTANT FILE DEVELOPED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE FNQLEDC

The file of Transport Déménagement DEC (see company profile on page 6) was one of the first projects he worked on, completely on his own, as a CEDO. Stéphane took the time to meet with the two entrepreneurs who had a project but didn't know where to go to get help. He inquired about their project to see what their project was all about and determine in what ways he could help them. He introduced them to the different stages they needed to go through to carry out the project. At a later stage, he examined which technical resources he could supply to respond to their needs.

Given that the person was a woman entrepreneur, Stéphane called the Women Entrepreneurship Advisor of the FNQLEDC, Emmanuel Bertrand-Gauvin, to know in what way he could provide her with support in this project. Subsequently, in cooperation with the two entrepreneurs, Stéphane spent a lot of time drafting the presentation of the project so he could sell the project and introduce the entrepreneur at her best, etc. Once the drafting of the business plan was completed, Stéphane called upon the services of the FNQLEDC Technical Advisor in Entrepreneurship, Frédérick Martel, who became involved in the file at the level of financial forecasts. The mobilization of everyone made it possible to draft the business plan in about two to three months and to file a sound application for funding under the *Aboriginal Initiatives Fund III*.

As Stéphane himself said, the fact of being newly-appointed to take up his post was an opportunity for him to play a proactive role in the files on which he works, something he might not have the chance to do in the future when he'll have more files to deal with. In spite of his busy schedule, he always makes the time to meet the people who are seeking his help or his services, and this, regardless of the nature or the size of the envisaged project. To him, it is essential to establish a solid foundation of trust with entrepreneurs and to exchange information on a regular basis with them in order to be aware of their reality and their needs.

Company Profile
TRANSPORT DÉMÉNAGEMENT DEC (TRANSPORTATION & MOVING SERVICES)

In Wôlinak, Martine Bergeron-Milette owns an active business in a traditionally male dominated sector: transportation and landscaping. Below, we've painted a brief portrait of this entrepreneur's journey along with her company, Transport Déménagement DEC.

Mrs. Bergeron-Milette, member of the Abenaki community of Wôlinak, and her spouse, Emmanuel Cloutier, established Transport Déménagement DEC in 2016. The two proprietors already had business experience because over the course of 10 years, they owned a landscaping company.

One day, the couple were in need of a moving company and ended up being dissatisfied with the service they were given. This negative experience sparked the idea of going into business in the field. The couple quickly conducted a market study, which allowed them to realize the services out there in terms of moving and transportation were limited in Trois-Rivières and its surrounding areas. It was quite clear there was a business opportunity to be had! The project finally became concrete in 2016 and since 2017, Mrs. Bergeron-Milette is now sole proprietor and her spouse occupies the position of Director of Operations. At the beginning, Transport Déménagement DEC only had one truck but by the end of its first year in business, the fleet was comprised of three trucks, which is a strong indication of its success.

DEVELOPING SERVICES TO MEET DEMANDS

Over the course of three years, the enterprise progressively grew based on several opportunities that presented themselves. New services were added to fulfill customer needs and demands and a fourth truck was purchased. Today, the company offers residential (including moving), and specialized and non-standard transportation services as well as landscaping and snow removal. Furthermore, it's also active commercially, a niche wherein two significant contracts have been secured with *Accent Meubles* in Victoriaville and *Piscines St-Louis* in Trois-Rivières. And last but certainly not least, Transport Déménagement DEC also offers storage services to its customers.

During the low season, the company has eight employees whereas in the busy season, the team expands to somewhere around 16. It includes three Indigenous employees, which Mrs. Bergeron-Milette wants to increase in the near future.

Martine Bergeron-Milette, the owner of Transport Déménagement DEC.

MOVING THE COMPANY TO WÔLINAK

With the company experiencing constant and significant growth, their location in Trois-Rivières was bursting at the seams. Consequently, it was increasingly more difficult to address all the requests more particularly in terms of storage. Furthermore, the trucks didn't fit in the garage because the door wasn't high enough. In order to be able to address these issues, they decided to move the business to Wôlinak. A 40 x 100 foot garage is currently being built on the company's new lots. This expansion project will enable Transport Déménagement DEC to purchase a fifth truck and increase their storage facilities.

Throughout the expansion project, the two entrepreneurs were able to count on assistance from Wôlinak's Economic Development Officer, Stéphane Lecours-Aubin. He provided them with a great deal of support and counselling during the business plan process and FNQLEDC advisors, Emmanuel Bertrand-Gauvin and Frédérick Martel were also involved.

In conclusion, we wish Mrs. Bergeron-Milette much success with her expansion projects!

Niona Project
DISCOVERING ABENAKI CULTURE THROUGH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The Niona Project is related to exploring, living and transmitting Abenaki culture and First Nations in general by way of information technologies. It's also a social project aimed at developing diverse skills among Abenaki youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

In 2016, Valérie Laforce, who was a community outreach worker and Social Services Assistant Coordinator with the Grand Conseil de la Nation Waban-Aki (GCNWA), launched this inspiring project. Within the framework of her work, she found herself contemplating what type of endeavour she and her social services department team could develop specifically for their youth. To that effect, she decided to hold discussion activities with the Wôlinak and Odanak youth to get their point of view. The main topics highlighted during these meetings were not only their interests with using technology and modern tools to broadcast their culture, but also on getting a better understanding of it. This is how Niona, which means "Us" in Abenaki, was born.

Some of the young people participating in the Niona Project.

Photo: Niona Project

NIONA SERVICES AND SOCIAL MISSION

Currently, 14 kids between the ages of 12 and 17 residing in one of the two Abenaki communities participate in the project. They predominantly produce videos, photography, maintain a blog and publish the *Salakiwi* magazine. This year, several schools in the regions have approached Niona requesting conferences on Abenakis and First Nations cultures. As you can see and it goes without saying, the participating youth are keeping very busy!

Because GCNWA's social services department runs the project, Niona isn't only of a cultural nature but holds a social purpose as well. Thus, it has become a tool through which the GCNWA can help kids develop their social and professional abilities as well as their cultural identity while conducting prevention in terms of social services. In fact, a youth counsellor is assigned to this special project to ensure all the kids involved reach their personal goals.

NIONA'S DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION

Over the last year, not only has the team received a significant number of requests from schools, but also from various GCNWA departments and Abenaki organizations. So much so that the next following months will be ever more busy for the youth who will be working on, among other things, producing content for an exhibit at the Abenaki Museum, creating an information packet for schools and covering various events such as the Wôlinak and Odanak Pow-wows.

Fast track to today, after three years of activities, Niona has enjoyed much success and the team is in a position to take on additional opportunities for development that are being offered to it. Valérie Laforce, who is now Niona's Coordinator, and Stéphane Lacours-Aubin, the Wôlinak and Odanak Economic Development Officer, are working jointly on a strategic reflection exercise. Myriam Vallières, FNQLEDC Youth Entrepreneurship Advisor is also involved in the portfolio and has presented them with a few development avenues, which could prove to be of great interest. Furthermore, they will have to reflect on how to keep the youth involved in the project once they reach 18 years of age and older.

This inspiring project will most definitely evolve over the next year. You won't want to miss a thing pertaining to Niona so check out their various publications and take a tour of the Niona Facebook Page and website at niona.org.

StartUP Nations
SOCIAL ECONOMY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FIRST NATIONS YOUNG PEOPLE

Social economy groups together all the economic activities with a view to meeting the responsibility of a social mission and contributing to the general interest. It is not focused on financial profitability, but on the benefits it brings to the collectivity. Social economy enterprises offer products and services in innovative sectors, and as diverse as those offered in traditional enterprises.

Social economy is a form of economy separate from market or public economy. It aims to reconcile economic activity with social contribution through the promotion of values, such as democracy and autonomy, improvement of the quality of life for the population, social and professional inclusion of individuals, job creation and increased social profitability (social solidarity, community mobilization, access to proximity services, etc.).

WHAT EXACTLY IS A SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISE?

Habitually social economy enterprises come in the form of coops, mutual associations or non-profit organizations. They operate in different sectors, for example in an early childhood centre, a housing cooperative, a home care enterprise, a recreational organization or a financial institution.

A social economy enterprise strives to be an enterprise managed by its members or its community. It sells a product or a service, while addressing the needs of the society in which it evolves. In this sense, social economy enterprises are well rooted in their environment, because they meet the needs identified locally. It is therefore crucial to be able to find the perfect balance between the pursuit of the enterprise mission and the responsibility of economic imperatives.

In choosing to become a collective entrepreneur (or of social economy), it means choosing to respond to a social mission and provoke a change in one's community. It also means making sure collective aspirations are carried forward. In summary, it means making the choice to "do things together".

SOCIAL ECONOMY IN ABORIGINAL AND FIRST NATIONS SETTING

Historically, solidarity, cooperation, sharing, autonomy and respect for the territory have been fundamental values for Aboriginal and First Nations People. In this sense, we can consider that they have been practicing "social economy" for time immemorial. This approach provides First Nations with a format development where their culture and their identity are the anchoring elements towards achieving the development objectives of the communities.

It is part of a context where socio-community development finds its source in an initiative focusing on democracy, cooperation (partnership), creativity and First Nations' take-over.

"A social economy enterprise is particularly appropriate to foster the take-over of the economic development of First Nations communities. There is nothing better than a person that comes from the same background to understand and respond to the needs of this setting", Mickel Robertson, Director General of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC).

LETTING THE WAY FOR THE NEW GENERATION

Social economy is letting the way for the new generation by encouraging participatory management and the sharing of expertise, and also by proposing new professional challenges to the young people.

Social economy enterprises provide opportunities for the youth to get involved and contribute toward building societies that resemble themselves. Young people can therefore contribute to their community by developing enterprises, by getting involved as decision-makers and by sharing their expertise upon completion of their education or traineeships.

Involving First Nations youth in social economy constitutes a lever for value creation: economic, social and cultural. This initiative provides First Nations young people the possibility to return to "doing things together" and participate in the local governance of their community *"Empowering our young people, it also means allowing them to create enterprises, which, together with the 11 200 enterprises of social economy in Quebec, contribute to the economic and social vitality of their communities"*, explains Béatrice Alain, Director General of the Chantier de l'économie sociale.

StartUP Nations
WHEN FIRST NATIONS YOUTH ARE ESPECIALLY COVETED BY COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The second edition of StartUP Nations took place on May 23rd to the 25th at Concordia University, in Montreal. Forty or so young people, aged 15 to 35, representing seven First Nations and eight communities, gathered to acquire tools that will enable them to develop their projects of collective entrepreneurship.

StartUP Nations Organizers with the young people and their attendants who took part in the event.

Initiated in 2017, StartUP Nations is an event centred on youth collective entrepreneurship. It seeks to promote social economy among Quebec's First Nations youth and to provide them with tools to develop a project of collective entrepreneurship, while offering them the opportunity to become driving forces for the socioeconomic development of their communities. *"The StartUP Nations was undertaken in the context of an initiative to promote youth collective entrepreneurship across the province. My vision of the StartUP Nations for the First Nations, was to allow for a collective movement to "do things together" and to meet the needs of the communities. This is the basis of social economy, respond to needs, but also, make money and create good jobs!"*, underlined Karine Awashish, initiator of this project and Social Economy Advisor for the FNQLEDC.

ORGANIZERS AND CONTEXT

Organized by the FNQLEDC and the First Nations Social Economy Regional Table (FNSERT), the event also relied on the support of several partners, including the Concordia University, the First Nations of Quebec-Labrador Youth Network (FNQLYN) and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC). StartUP Nations falls within the context of the deployment of the Social Economy Youth Incubator Initiative (SISMIC), developed and deployed by the Poles of the Social Economy, which are active in all areas throughout the province of Quebec.

On the first and second days of StartUP Nations, the young entrepreneurs had the opportunity to attend conferences and specially-themed workshops conducted by experts specialized in financing, project management and communications. The final day was devoted to the preparation of the *pitch* selling the idea of collective projects for presentation to a panel of experts ("Dragons") invited for the occasion.

Generally speaking, this second edition was highly instructive and particularly rich in exchanges. In addition to the knowledge acquired throughout these three days of event, this experience allowed young people to develop a sense of responsibility and their ability to express themselves.

StartUP Nations
DIVERSIFIED AND PROMISING COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS

The Listuguj Team presenting its project to the Dragons.

Eight teams participated in the StartUP Nations. This represents as many great collective projects run by young entrepreneurs from several communities. Following is an overview of the different projects.

The projects that young people wish to implement vary widely. They cover the sectors of tourism, accommodation, Native culture, food and restaurant industry, services for people and community-based development.

Uashat-Maliotenam Team, **"Utapi Project"**

Creation of a cultural site offering a "typical" immersion in the Innu culture. The project's main objectives would be to share traditional knowledge and bring together both Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals. The project proposes a camping ground, workshops, an arts and crafts store and seasonal activities. It would target both community members and tourists.

Ekuanitshit Team **(Mingan), "Innu héberge Café"Project**

Creation of an inn offering a diverse range of services, including: "typical" lodging, restaurant, food tasting, traditional activities, canoe and Zodiac expeditions. This place would be a venue to regroup the individual entrepreneurship projects of the group of women who bear this collective project. The main objective would be to propose an "unforgettable" stay in a site that offers comfort and peace and tranquility. Its target clientele would be the members of the community and those of the surrounding areas, and visitors as well.

Manawan Team, **"Nikiska" Project**

Development of a public community beach on the shores of Metabeckeka Lake. The project's objective would be to create a safe swimming space to lessen the risks of drowning. This project came into being as a result of the large number of drownings reported in the community. It would target the members of the community and visitors as well.

Mistissini Team, **"Moose Hide Preparation" Project**

Expansion of the moose hide processing plant. This project aims to bring together Elders and youth to perpetuate the tradition of moose hide preparation. This project would also help combatting waste. In addition, it would make it possible to craft objects, footwear, garments and moose hide by-products. The project would target community members.

Quebec Team, **"Centre Mamu" Project**

Establishment of a multi-service infrastructure in Nutashkuan. The project would be broken down into four specific activities: Seniors' residence, healthy lifestyle choices, transfer of culture knowledge, traditional cuisine. The aim of the project would be to meet the needs identified by the community. The project would target the community members, and the general public.

Mashteuiatsh Team, **Traditional Food Restaurant Project**

Creation of a restaurant offering traditional Ilnu and Atikamekw meals. This project would foster the sharing of the traditional gastronomic culture. The project would target a clientele from the community and the Roberval region.

Young Team of Mashteuiatsh

Pessamit Team, **"La Coop Uashkaikan" Project**

Implementation of a school restaurant in the secondary school of the community. The project aim is to avoid junk food consumption in the community and promote healthy eating habits. The target clientele comprises the students and the school staff.

Listuguj Team, **"Ta'n Wetapegsulti'gw" Project**

Creation of a cultural centre offering various services, which include: the sale of Aboriginal artists' products, cultural transmission workshops, activities on the territory, traditional cuisine. The goal of this project is to provide an opportunity to share Indigenous culture and art. The project targets the residents of the Listuguj community and the surrounding areas (Gaspé, New Brunswick), as well as tourists.

Photo: François Pillon

TOURISM COLUMN • TOURISM COLUMN • TOURISM COLUMN • TOURISM COLUMN

ON A JOURNEY TO DISCOVERING THE ABENAKI PEOPLE!

BY LAURENCE LAINÉ, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING AGENT, QUEBEC ABORIGINAL TOURISM

Kway! The Abenaki are waiting for you in the magnificent central region of Quebec. Odanak and Wôlinak are the two Abenaki communities of Quebec located on the fertile plains of this region south of the Saint-Lawrence River. A most welcoming people, they are reputed for their basketry, traditional dances and masks.

The Abenaki Nation owes its name to the word *W8banakiak* (W-on-banakiak) that translates to "People of the Rising Sun". They speak the W8banaki language and although over recent years, the language is threatened, it nevertheless continues to be valued and cherished by this community. For decades now, the two communities have chosen tourism as a socioeconomic platform to share their culture, art and history. Whether in Odanak, Wôlinak or surroundings, several innovative and authentic touristic experiences are currently offered with others under development to enhance this highly interesting portfolio.

THE ABENAKIS MUSEUM: THE FIRST INDIGENOUS MUSEUM IN QUEBEC

Founded in 1965, the Abenaki Museum offers a captivating cultural experience. Located in the community of Odanak, along the St-François River and a short 10kms from Saint-Pierre Lake, the museum provides permanent and temporary exhibits throughout the year. A tour of Odanak's church and chapel is also proposed to complement the experience. Additionally, the Tolba walking trail can be found close to the Museum and it allows you to delve into the fauna and flora of this beautiful community. Take home an authentic souvenir thanks to the Museum's arts and craft shop named Kiz8bak "Light of Day"!

museeabenakis.ca

PLUMES ET PACOTILLES: A TALENT THAT COMBINES BOTH TRADITION AND MODERNITY

In the community of Wôlinak, talent and inspiration have a name and an address: Plumes and Pacotilles. Artist, artisan and singer, Sylvie Bernard is the soul of this workshop-boutique who bears the colours of Abenaki art and crafting. She combines with great delicacy the sensual materials from traditional Native cultures such as leather, wood and fur. Drawn from inspiration, she may add gold thread, silver, semi-precious stones or acrylic to create exceptional pieces such as artwork, ornaments, contemporary clothing and more. Mrs. Bernard is truly a passionate and passion inducing creator!

sylviebernard.com

FAMILLE D'AUTREFOIS : A FAMILY OF BYGONE DAYS RICH IN HISTORY

Joseph François along with his spouse, Mali Lizan, their daughter, Sogali and son, Mika, arrive in your village to do a bit of trading with you. Because they travel from village to village, this picturesque 19th-century French Canadian and Abenaki family have a lot to tell you! Whether through savouring food, chanting, dances and storytelling, you will be charmed by their dynamic and realistic performance. An enchanting nomad family that travels throughout Quebec for all types of events: schools, celebrations and festivals, museums, municipal anniversaries and lots more!

quebenakis@live.ca

ALANIS OBOMSAWIN: AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ABENAKIS ARTIST

Multidisciplinary Abenaki artist, Mrs. Alanis Obomsawin is a prolific filmmaker who is internationally renowned. In fact, last year she was honoured during the "Collection les Bâtisseurs culturels montréalais" (a collection of Montreal builders of culture). Thus, following in Leonard Cohen's footsteps, a portrait of Mrs. Obomsawin is now displayed on a building in Downtown Montreal. The magnificent mural, done by Meky Ottawa, a young Atikamekw artist, is a reproduction of an image taken from the booklet of the 1984 Bush Lady album. A series of engravings from the artist entitled "*Les vanniers waban-akis d'Odanak*" (Odanak Waban-akis basket makers) is exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts until the end of August 2019 and well worth a visit!

DATES TO REMEMBER THIS SUMMER!

- The 60th Edition of the Odanak Pow-wow: July 5th to the 7th
- Wôlinak Pow-wow: September 13th to the 15th

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YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP COLUMN

ABORIGINAL YOUTH: A DRIVING FORCE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

BY VÉRONIQUE ÉDÉ, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, FNQLEDC

More and more First Nations Youth are showing their determination to contribute to the economic and cultural prosperity of their communities through the perpetuation of traditions. Frédérique Gros-Louis meets exactly this definition. She is a young entrepreneur of the Huron-Wendat Nation and she creates regalia and customised beadwork.

Based in Wendake, Frédérique Gros-Louis is a 24 year old entrepreneur. Her business "FGL Artisanat" offers services in the confection of traditional dance outfits (regalia and traditional skirts) and beadwork (jewelry and accessories) for First Nation members who wish to become involved in pow-wows and traditional ceremonies. Being a pow-wow dancer herself since six years, her business project stemmed from her various performances on the ground.

"From year to year, I could see the number of dancers increase. Habitually, dancers create their regalia themselves or they ask a family member to do it for them. There is a shortage of craftspeople to make the dancers' traditional clothes; this is why I started to make my own regalia outfits. One thing leading to another, the other dancers started to ask me where my regalia came from, and from there, I started to get orders to make regalia and beadwork, without even being known as an artisan",underlined Frédérique.

Frédérique Gros-Louis wearing one of her creations.

Photos: Frédérique Gros-Louis

Today, Frédérique offers her services mainly in Wendake. She proposes regalia (for the Jingle Dress Dance and "Fancy shawl") and traditional skirts for women, teens and children. The latter are a clientele with a lot of potential for Frédérique's activity, because a growing number of parents, especially locally, wish to share their Native culture with their children at a very early age.

She also proposes customised beadwork under the form of jewelry and hair accessories. For the time being, she does not make regalia for men, because there are very few dancers in Wendake, but she hopes that in the future, she will be getting orders from that clientele.

During approximately seven months, Frédérique Gros-Louis was coached in her business creation project by the FNQLEDC, particularly for the drafting of her business plan and in her quest for funding, so her enterprise would get the equipment necessary for the fabrication of her products. In fact, it is with great pride that we learned that Frédérique has obtained funds from the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA).

We congratulate her on this unqualified success. As envisaged in a corporate vision, we wish her every success in becoming a benchmark in Aboriginal traditional clothing in Quebec!

A CONTEST TO STIMULATE PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN WEMOTACI

From June 10th to the 13th, 2019, Nikanik Economic Development Corporation, in collaboration with the FNQLEDC, organized a contest entitled "My chance to become an entrepreneur" aimed at stimulating the creation of businesses in Wemotaci.

Currently In Wemotaci, such is the case in many other First Nations communities, community businesses outnumber private companies. To remedy this situation, the Corporation decided to run a contest giving its community members the chance to develop a business project. In total, over thirty individuals showed interest wherein 17 submitted an overview detailing their project. In the end, 10 projects were retained and 11 future entrepreneurs moved forward with the next phase.

A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BOOTCAMP

Over the course of four days, the participants were involved in an entrepreneurial bootcamp, hosted by FNQLEDC advisors, Myriam Vallières and Frédérick Martel. During this accelerated training, they were able to become knowledgeable with the contents of a business plan, learn about various business structures and available funding sources. The last day of the bootcamp was dedicated to preparing the entrepreneurs for the final activity that consisted in presenting, with only a few minutes each, their respective projects to the jury, *The Eagles*. The jury included Steve Laveau, FNQLEDC Economic Development Advisor, accompanied by representatives from economic development organizations from the Mauricie region and by the Wemotaci Atikamekw Council. Despite the overwhelming and understandable nervousness, all the participants brilliantly mastered the challenge! They've all come out winners and were granted $1000.00 towards realizing their projects. Additionally, three entrepreneurs were successful in securing first, second and third place: Lisanne Petiquay (Boutique Miskizann, 1st place, $5000.00), Lisa-Marie Coocoo (Centre Opoho, 2nd place, $3000.00) and Jocelyne Basile (Crèmerie, 3rd place, $2000.00)

DIVERSE AND PROMISING PROJECTS

Projects developed and presented during the contest are very diverse, anywhere from a Laundromat to the crafting and sale of traditional moccasins to a garage and a rest area consistent with safe travels towards the community. For Mr. Adam Jourdain, Director General of Nikanik Economic Development Corporation; "this experience once again sheds some light on the immense progress in Wometaci in terms of economic development". Following the contest, all the participants will benefit from the support and assistance of Mr. Jourdain and his colleague, Mr. Nicky Petiquay, towards developing and achieving their projects.

Participants during the entrepreneurial bootcamp.

All contest participants along with trainers and organisers.

Photos: FNQLEDC

The FNQLEDC team is proud to have been part of this wonderful adventure and been able to contribute to the contest's success. If this article inspires you and, just like Nikanik Economic Development Corporation, you want to stimulate the creation of businesses in your community, don't hesitate to contact any one of our Advisors!

FNQLEDC in the field

On April 17 2019, in cooperation with Aboriginal Tourism Quebec, the FNQLEDC hosted a one-day conference on Aboriginal tourism at Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations de Wendake. A total of 62 persons took part in the event, thus contributing to making this event, a success!

On June 4 2019, a group of 28 women of Lac Simon attended an Entrepreneurship Awareness workshop presented by our advisor in Women's Entrepreneurship, Emmanuel Bertrand-Gauvin.

In early May, our Youth Entrepreneurship Advisor, Myriam Vallières, traveled to Mistissini for a day of mobilization in preparation for the StartUP Nations.

On June 5 and 6 2019, our Economic Development Advisor traveled to Rouyn-Noranda to attend *'The North and its Logistics'*, a conference organized by the Secretariat to the Cree Nation /Abitibi-Témiscamingue Economic Alliance.

From June 10th to the 13th 2019, our advisors Myriam Vallières and Frédérick Martel facilitated an entrepreneurship bootcamp in Wemotaci.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE FNQLEDC

MEETING OF THE FNQLEDC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date: July 9, 2019
Place: Hotel Signature, Quebec City

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Date: To be confirmed
Place: Quebec City

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