

YUKON  
ABORIGINAL  
WOMEN'S  
SUMMITS

STRONG WOMEN,  
STRONG COMMUNITIES:  
Furthering Aboriginal  
Women's Equality

PRIORITIES AND KEY MESSAGES



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## PRIORITIES AND KEY MESSAGES

In November 2007, the Women's Directorate and Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues (YACWI) co-hosted two Yukon Aboriginal women's summits. The summits took place in Watson Lake and Whitehorse, Yukon and brought together over 200 Aboriginal women, Chiefs, Ministers and government officials.

The theme of the summits was *Strong Women, Strong Communities: Furthering Aboriginal Women's Equality*. The goals were to bring women together to communicate the outcomes of the 2007 National Aboriginal Women's Summit and determine priorities for furthering Aboriginal women's equality in the Yukon. Aboriginal women were provided an opportunity to come together to network and to determine priorities under the themes Education, Leadership Development and Wellness. The priorities are highlighted in this document.

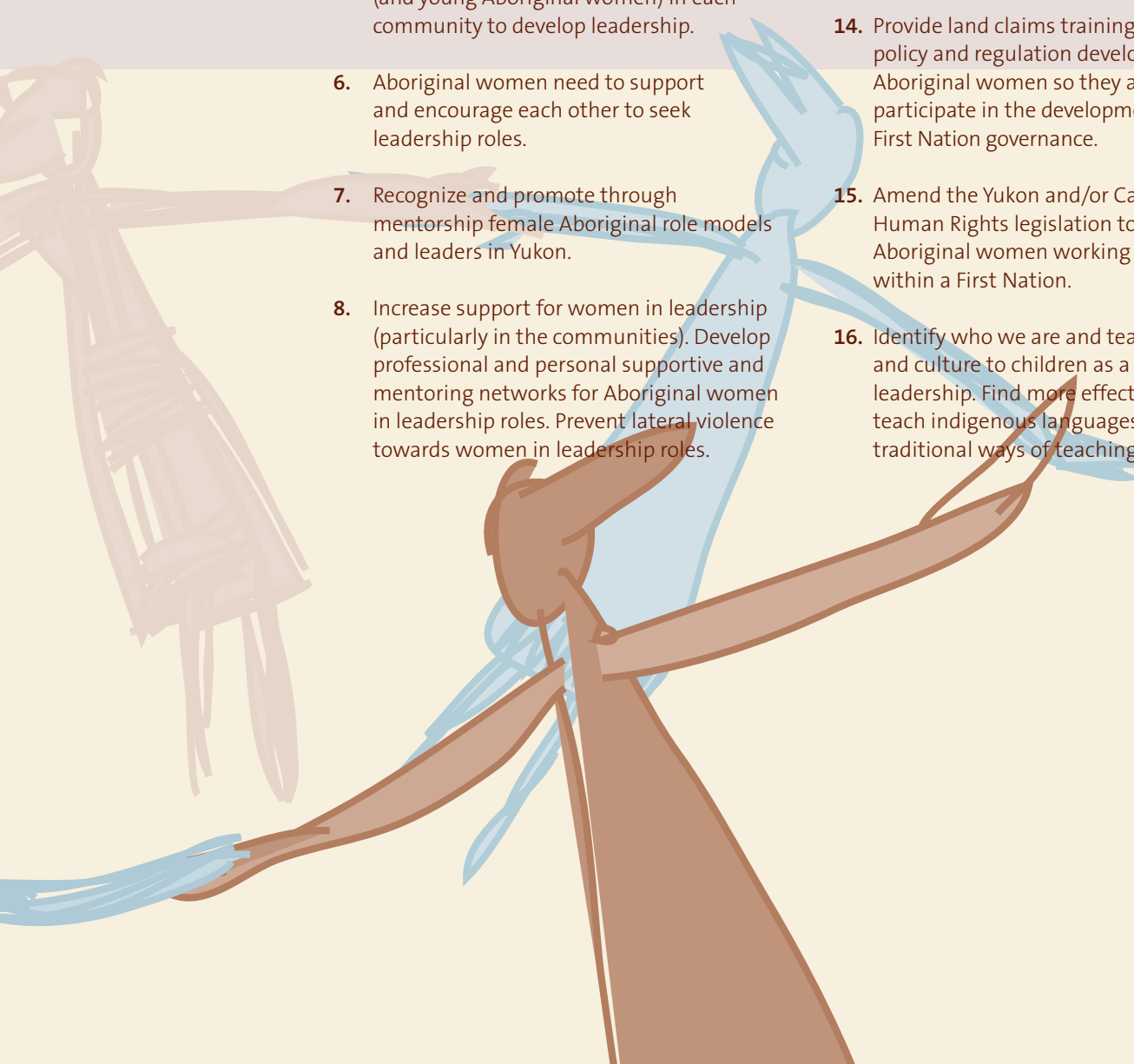
A special thanks to all of the Aboriginal women who made these summits possible.

# EDUCATION ↙

1. Ensure curriculum development in Yukon schools includes cultural components such as: land claims, the history of Yukon First Nations, traditional roles of First Nation women and men.
2. Our young people, leaders, school teachers and front-line workers should know about residential school. Discuss residential school, the effects it has on First Nation people and the settlement with young people so that all understand the history of this, to bring closure.
3. Offer life skills workshops to Aboriginal women (anger management, healthy relationships, self-esteem, respect, self-care).
4. Saturate media with messages about violence in all forms: family/spousal. Form women's circles to give voice to the issue of violence and offer more support to victims.
5. Provide violence prevention education in schools – use visual media campaigns and ensure educational materials are culturally relevant.
6. Increase support to community front-line workers (training on skill development, networking opportunities, increased clinical supervision).
7. First Nations people to take over the delivery of First Nation language programming, including language immersion classes.
8. As self-governing First Nations, we have the right to make our own laws (identify who we are, why we're here, where we came from).
9. Find a process to encourage women to come forward about the violence they have experienced, with a sense of safety. Women have to know they will be believed; too often young girls are blamed.
10. Find a way to get government to include community people in their training. Life-long learning to build mind, body and spirit.
11. Outreach to children in schools on alcohol and drug issues should be provided by First Nations people.
12. Foster support for family reunions where genealogy workshops, clan responsibilities, responsibility for naming a child takes place.
13. Fund education that is outside of DIAND's criteria.
14. Provide information on how to talk to your kids about sexuality and sexual abuse.
15. Enhance counselling in schools, especially for life skills and traditional knowledge.
16. Move services to the rural communities and develop local, community strategies for housing and justice.

# LEADERSHIP ←

1. Include the voices of female Aboriginal Elders as advisors in meetings that involve First Nation people.
2. Increase representation of Aboriginal women in decision-making positions in governments, corporations and nonprofit organizations.
3. Increase representation of Aboriginal women at decision-making tables dealing with water, land and traditional knowledge.
4. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal women to lead policy, research and program design on Aboriginal women specific issues.
5. Support youth Aboriginal councils (and young Aboriginal women) in each community to develop leadership.
6. Aboriginal women need to support and encourage each other to seek leadership roles.
7. Recognize and promote through mentorship female Aboriginal role models and leaders in Yukon.
8. Increase support for women in leadership (particularly in the communities). Develop professional and personal supportive and mentoring networks for Aboriginal women in leadership roles. Prevent lateral violence towards women in leadership roles.
9. Develop a leadership program for women. Provide leadership training to Aboriginal women (including how to balance work/family responsibilities and personal wellness, communication skills and conflict resolution skills, financial management.)
10. Include courses in the public education system on leadership and role modeling.
11. Support and recognize traditional disciplinary ways of child rearing.
12. Address gender bias and racism under Indian Act, Bill C-31 (the definition of status.)
13. Teach land claims, effects of colonization and racism in all schools.
14. Provide land claims training including policy and regulation development to Aboriginal women so they are able to participate in the development of their First Nation governance.
15. Amend the Yukon and/or Canadian Human Rights legislation to protect Aboriginal women working for and living within a First Nation.
16. Identify who we are and teach language and culture to children as a basis towards leadership. Find more effective ways to teach indigenous languages including traditional ways of teaching.



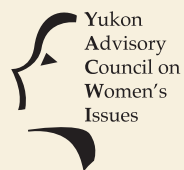
# WELLNESS ↓


1. Build a traditional healing centre(s) focusing on addictions and violence with programming that incorporates traditional knowledge, medicines, support and healing for the whole family (incorporate spiritual healing, include families and the use of Elder's knowledge; Dene-Net-Sete-Tan.)
2. More family support counsellors are needed in rural communities. Counselling should focus on the whole family. There needs to be more counsellors in the schools.
3. Provide culturally relevant long-term family violence and sexual abuse counselling within communities (include women's and men's circles).
4. Continue to support Restorative/Community justice initiatives and include Elders in teaching the importance of respect.
5. Offender treatment should include traditional practices including land-based programming and an apology to victims and families.
6. Offenders must be held accountable at an individual, community and government level for making the choice to use violence.
7. Support youth who speak out on issues of importance to them (violence, housing, poverty etc.)
8. Provide language and cultural programming and housing to students making the transition from community to school in Whitehorse. Consider each First Nation having a building in Whitehorse for students.
9. Need tutoring, support and encouragement for young moms in school so they do not fall behind.
10. Have a Teslin-style treatment centre (for alcohol and drugs) in all communities.
11. Use land-based camps and teachings of own people.
12. Strengthen Aboriginal women's organizations by bringing together Yukon First Nation women including Elders and Youth to identify a common Mission, Vision, Goals and Values.
13. Encourage and support healthy/active-living initiatives, diabetes prevention and promotion of traditional foods.
14. Teach young boys caregiver roles so they will be able to share these responsibilities within their family and to respect women. Traditionally they provided and protected.
15. In every community ensure there is a transition home or transportation option to get to a safe home for women, children and Elders who are fleeing violence.
16. Increase access and availability to affordable, safe and healthy housing for Aboriginal women and children, include affordable rent-to-own housing program and housing options and support for youth who want to live independently.
17. Make prevention of violence against Aboriginal women and children a priority — develop individual community strategic plans on violence prevention including sexual assaults and drug and alcohol addiction.
18. Provide affordable, accessible child care.
19. Encourage and train more First Nation people to become Counsellors and Advocacy workers.
20. Create an alcohol-free indoor place to socialize in every community and provide programming options for women (exercise, crafts and mom and tot play groups).
21. Public education campaigns should highlight that violence is a choice that offenders make. Increase male participation in violence prevention education initiatives.
22. In each community provide a night where teenagers can come together in a safe and confidential place to express their voices, concerns, ideas. Ensure support people are available for them.

# KEY MESSAGES ↓

1. ACTION is the most important outcome of the Summit.
2. Reclaiming cultural traditions and identity through teaching and celebrating.
3. There is a significant need for counselling and healing, particularly for the whole family.
4. Address and eliminate racism.
5. Encourage and support Aboriginal women to take on decision-making and political leadership roles.
6. Use the wisdom of Elders as teachers.
7. Respect youth.
8. All of the recommendations are important, and it is difficult to prioritize.
9. The themes are linked: you need wellness to succeed in education and leadership.
10. Find more ways for First Nation people to be developing and presenting programming in schools.
11. Ensure that school curriculum is taught in a way that engages First Nation children and youth.
12. Support youth to become leaders.
13. Address systemic disrespect and racism for people who are in financial need (particularly from front-line government offices).





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