

BRINGING STRENGTH FROM THE HOME FIRE

A Descriptive Review of First Nations and Métis Cultural Programming in Saskatchewan's Provincial Correctional System

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections and Policing



Prepared by:

Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies



March 2013



Centre for
Forensic Behavioural Science
and Justice Studies

The Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies is an interdisciplinary research and evaluation unit at the University of Saskatchewan. A portion of its funding comes from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections and Policing. This report is a direct outcome of that funding support.

Research Team:

Dr. Chad Nilson (lead researcher)
Christine Jones (research assistant)
Dr. Steven Wormith (research advisor)

Contact:

Ronda Appell (coordinator)
phone: (306) 966-2687
email: forensic.centre@usask.ca
web: <http://www.artsandscience.usask.ca/fbsjs/>

Proper Reference:

Nilson, C. (2013). *Bringing Strength From The Home Fire: A Descriptive Review of First Nations and Métis Cultural Programming in Saskatchewan's Provincial Correctional System*. A report prepared for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing. Saskatoon, SK: Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies - University of Saskatchewan.

*"We work to help our people find a place in their own culture.
To do that we need to bring them a little strength from our own home fire."*

- First Nations Elder



Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies

110B Arts Building 9 Campus Drive Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A5 Canada
ph: (306) 966-2687 fx: (306) 966-6007 email: forensic.centre@usask.ca
web: www.artsandscience.usask.ca/fbsjs



Faye Ozmun
Director of First Nations and Métis Programs
Offender Services
Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing

March 5, 2013

RE: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan's Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies, it is with great pleasure that I present to you this descriptive review of First Nations and Métis Programs provided in Saskatchewan's adult and young offender correctional institutions. This year-long opportunity to work with you and the cultural staff within our Province's correctional institutions has been a rewarding adventure for our Centre. I sincerely hope that the findings of this report will be useful to you as you continue to guide the activities of First Nations and Métis Programs within the Offender Services unit of Corrections.

Within this report is an overview of the two-part process in which we gathered information on First Nations and Métis programs. The first part involved extensive interviews and focus groups with cultural coordinators, cultural advisors and Elders. The second part involved the design and implementation of program monitoring at a majority of both your adult and young offender facilities. I am confident that the information we gathered through these methods will provide for you a solid overview of First Nations and Métis programs—at least from the perspective of cultural coordinators and advisors.

As a researcher, I greatly benefited from the many warm welcomes your team provided to me when I visited their institutions. On an individual level, I was very thankful for the rich and powerful stories that the advisors and coordinators shared with me during our time together. This project will forever be a memorable experience in my professional career.

Thank you for inviting the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies the opportunity to provide some support to you and your team. We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Chad Nilson, PhD
Inaugural Research Fellow
Prince Albert Office: (306) 953-8384 Saskatoon Office: (306) 966-2707
Email: chad.nilson@usask.ca

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	p.6
2.0	PROGRAM BACKGROUND	p.8
2.1	Program Personnel	p.10
2.2	Service Delivery	p.13
2.3	Program Facilities	p.16
3.0	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	p.17
4.0	METHODOLOGY	p.18
4.1	Qualitative Methods	p.18
4.2	Quantitative Methods	p.19
5.0	RESULTS	p.27
5.1	Interviews and Focus Group	p.27
5.2	Program Monitoring System	p.37
6.0	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	p.40
7.0	LIMITATIONS	p.46
8.0	CONCLUSION	p.47
9.0	RECOMMENDATIONS	p.48
APPENDICES		

BRINGING STRENGTH FROM THE HOME FIRE

A Descriptive Review of First Nations and Métis Cultural Programming in Saskatchewan's Provincial Correctional System

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2011, representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing met with the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies to discuss options for carrying out a fact-finding examination of First Nations and Métis Programs (FNMP) within the Corrections side of the Ministry. During this initial meeting, the Ministry posed a number of general questions that it had hoped the Centre could answer about First Nations and Métis Programs. There was also some desire for the Centre to help identify a means for more consistent cultural services to be offered throughout the provincial correctional system in a way that did not actually prescribe cultural traditions and practices among the institutions.

In January of 2012, the review process began. Over the course of one year, researchers from the Centre worked with a number of staff and service providers contracted to adult and youth provincial correctional institutions. Through interviews and focus groups information was gathered on the delivery practices of cultural programs, the benefits of these programs to offenders, and the barriers that staff to these programs encounter in their day to day work. Other topics explored during this review include the selection of cultural programs and services, recruitment of participants, recruitment of cultural advisors, participant needs, release planning, relations with other correctional staff and general challenges and success of the program.

One major accomplishment of this process has been the design and implementation of a program monitoring system in a majority of adult and youth institutions. Up until Saskatchewan Corrections had engaged the Centre in this work, there was considerable variation in the reporting practices of cultural programming in the different institutions. Through various working groups with cultural coordinators and advisors, the Centre was able to identify three common service areas in FNMP. These include *group learning*, *cultural participation*, and *individual mentoring*. Under each topic, cultural program staff have been trained to keep information on participation and delivery at both the program and individual level.

The purpose of this document is to report on activities of FNMP within Saskatchewan's correctional system. While both the Ministry and Centre acknowledge that cultural programs and services may have an impact on positive behavioural change or recidivism, this project does not completely measure this relationship. Rather this document reports on the operation, delivery and access to Aboriginal cultural services and support that are offered to adult and young offenders.

The findings of this descriptive review should serve as an aid in the development of a program-wide perspective of cultural services and supports offered throughout the provincial

correctional system. This review has been designed to provide support to program staff and managers as they develop a common service delivery framework for FNMP. Such a framework must bring consistency to cultural programming across the province without sacrificing the ability of program staff to meet the diverse cultural needs of Aboriginal offenders in Saskatchewan.

While gathering information for this report, the research team was very aware of the fact that culture is not something that can be measured or observed. With respect to Aboriginal culture, it is a way of life that spans all parts of a person's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. What can be measured and observed however, is the extent to which correctional institutions provide offenders with opportunities to engage in cultural learning, activities and mentorship. As such, the bulk of this report is an overview of the ways in which cultural coordinators and advisors help offenders engage in Aboriginal culture and tradition.

This review begins with an introduction of cultural programming in Saskatchewan—including their design and implementation. A look at the main questions driving this review helps set the stage for the two-part methodology subsequently described herein. The third section of this report presents results from interviews and focus groups held with program staff—including cultural coordinators and advisors. During the implementation stage of the program monitoring system, preliminary data were gathered from 3 pilot institutions in Prince Albert (male, female, youth) and 1 in Saskatoon (male). The fourth section of this report presents the results of this quantitative data analysis. Following this, findings from the analysis of results provide a general summary of what has been learned through this review of Saskatchewan Corrections' First Nations and Métis Programs. Next is a brief discussion on the limitations of this report and its methodology. Finally, this report ends with some observations and recommendations which may be considered in efforts to help improve offender access to consistent and effective cultural programs in the Saskatchewan provincial correctional system.

2.0 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

According to internal documents from Saskatchewan Corrections, as early as the 1970s, Aboriginal offenders were allowed to organize and develop self-help groups that were based upon traditional values and practices. This led to a variety of pow wows, drumming and singing circles, and the building of sweat lodges, all within the confines of provincial correctional centres. These opportunities allowed for corrections officials to see the valuable role of Aboriginal culture in the healing process. More so, it demonstrated the ability of First Nations and Métis Elders and cultural leaders to successfully engage Aboriginal offenders in a personal healing journey. By the 1990s, it became more commonly accepted for correctional institutions to develop contractual relationships with First Nations or Métis Elders and cultural leaders. This served as the beginning of what eventually grew into a system-wide delivery of First Nations and Métis Programs in Saskatchewan's provincial correctional institutions.

The rationale for providing cultural services to offenders is so that they can learn or be reminded of who they are as Aboriginal people and to understand why traditional ways of life are so important to personal wellness. It is commonly believed that many Aboriginal offenders have lost touch with their traditional way of life. Although both offenders and cultural staff represent at least seven different Aboriginal groups—Cree, Saulteaux, Dené, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota and Métis—cultural services offered to offenders are designed to instill confidence and personal attachment to all forms of Aboriginal culture.

In its early formation, First Nation and Métis Programs (once known as Elder Services) was designed to achieve a number of objectives within both the Adult and Young Offender correctional systems. Under a directive from the Ministry in 2002, the following objectives were determined:

- To ensure that Aboriginal offenders are provided with an opportunity to practice their culture and traditions without discrimination;
- To ensure Elders and the Aboriginal communities perceive that they have ownership in the reintegration of offenders;
- To provide a reasonable level of counselling, spiritual guidance and support to Aboriginal offenders;
- To promote and support Aboriginal participation in correctional programming;
- To provide emergency services to and for Aboriginal offenders who have or are experiencing a crisis;

- To obtain support for reintegration of the Aboriginal offender by the development of partnerships with the Aboriginal community in the delivery of case management and community supervision services;
- To enhance staff understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture and traditions.

While the objectives of what has now become known as First Nations and Métis Programs have been pursued by all correctional institutions with cultural staff, the means by which cultural coordinators and their advisors have tried to achieve these objectives has varied.

On the young offender side of Corrections, different institutions started to provide cultural programming at different periods in time. Furthermore, the delivery of cultural services in each young offender facility has been designed differently. Some are driven by a top-down therapeutic approach to programming, whereas others are guided strictly by the coordinator and his/her cultural advisors. Much of this variation is attributable to how each young offender facility hired its cultural coordinator, and what responsibilities they placed upon him/her when they were hired.

In the adult side of corrections, a majority of the institutions adopted cultural programming near the same time. As a result, there are more similarities in the design and delivery of cultural programming across the adult facilities than across young offender facilities. Despite this, the variations between cultural programs in the various adult centres have been significant enough to make it difficult for Saskatchewan Corrections to deliver consistent types of cultural services and supports across the province.

As a whole, the unit of First Nations and Métis Programs is guided by the *vision* of Aboriginal offenders having an enhanced holistic balance, both within their life inside and outside of the institution. The *mission* of FNMP is to contribute towards safer communities by decreasing reoffending, through offering offenders guidance and by engaging them with First Nations and Métis knowledge and tradition.

In January of 2012, the coordinators and advisors worked with programming staff at the Ministry of Corrections and Policing to devise a strategic plan. Out of that process came four main *goals* for First Nations and Métis Programs:

1) BALANCE: Provide cultural and traditional services that incorporate effective correctional practices. Develop and deliver cultural services that are guided by our Elders and best practices to compliment core correctional practices.

2) TEAMWORK: Partner with Elders and communities to encourage and strengthen belonging and support. Honour partnerships with First Nations and Métis people, organizations, and communities – based on respect, collective responsibility, and teamwork.

3) ACCOUNTABILITY: Accept the responsibility entrusted in our work and the accountability for achieving results that help build a safer Saskatchewan. Encourage a balanced approach to public safety, one that respects individual rights, client needs and spiritual/cultural protocol.

4) RESPECT: Advocate for an environment that supports healing and growth by sharing and modeling the traditional First Nations and Métis ways of life. Promote respect and understanding for the difficult backgrounds and personal experiences of First Nations and Métis people involved in the correctional system.

2.1 Program Personnel

When it comes to program staff, all adult institutions and the closed young offender facilities are provided with funding to employ a cultural coordinator. Open custody young offender facilities are not provided with a cultural coordinator. Instead, their cultural programs are organized by the nearest closed custody facility.

In most institutions, the cultural coordinator is hired into a full-time position. In some facilities however, the coordinator is given a part-time position, or is required to split their time with other responsibilities in the institution. In all institutions the cultural coordinator position is designated as an Aboriginal position.

According to internal documents from Saskatchewan Corrections, “cultural coordinators are responsible for developing and delivering cultural programming for offenders within the facilities, facilitating cultural education workshops for staff, providing advice to management in the development of culturally relevant policies and procedures, and liaising with the local First Nations and Métis community to gain advice on program development and cultural services”. Cultural coordinators are also responsible for participating in offender reintegration planning and providing community escorts of offenders to cultural events, wakes or funerals.

One of the major responsibilities of the coordinator position is to become connected with cultural supports in the surrounding Aboriginal communities. Conducting outreach and forming bonds with cultural leaders is an expected means of developing such rapport. Once formed, these relationships are to be used in two ways.

The first is to identify and recruit cultural advisors to come into the facilities and provide cultural services and support. Cultural advisors are to be recognized as members of the Aboriginal community who are regarded to have a considerable level of experience and personal dedication to traditional ways of life. This may include knowledge of ceremony, storytelling, protocol, values and spirituality. In most, but not all cases, the cultural advisors are respected Elders in their community. If not, they are considered to be cultural leaders in their community, who have earned special recognition and respect because of their personal journeys and dedication to a traditional way of Aboriginal life.

The second use of coordinator relations with surrounding Aboriginal communities is in release planning. While it is not the responsibility of coordinators to plan offender release, they are often called upon by other correctional staff to provide support in the process. Many Aboriginal offenders are disconnected to their home communities. Others have little to no attachment to cultural supports outside of the institutions. Using their knowledge of the surrounding Aboriginal community, coordinators are tasked with finding offenders cultural supports in the community to which they will be released. This will help maintain at least some form of continuity in the cultural aspect of their life as they make the transition back to the community.

A related responsibility of cultural coordinators is to serve as a liaison between the correctional institution and Aboriginal community leaders. The longstanding mistrust of the contemporary justice system among First Nations and Métis communities requires coordinators to help correctional institutions show respect to the social, historical, and political perspectives being shared by Aboriginal leaders. At the same time, coordinators also must work with Aboriginal leaders to build trust and awareness, facilitate effective communication, and alleviate common fears and assumptions.

Another major responsibility of cultural coordinators is to report on the types, frequency and intensity of cultural services offered to offenders. Weekly, monthly and annual reporting to the FNMP director, as well as their own institution's management, has become a major part of their job. As further sections of this report will discuss, the reporting process itself will help coordinators in the management and planning of cultural services within their own institutions.

A more visible role of coordinators in First Nations and Métis Programs is the oversight and planning of cultural events, activities, mentoring and other services within the institution. This would also include the coordination and maintenance of supplies and grounds for spiritual ceremonies (i.e. sweat lodge, smudge kits, cloth, rocks, medicines).

While externally contracted Elders or the program's cultural advisors are often responsible for facilitating such engagements, the role of the coordinator is to make sure that the plans unfold properly. In some cases however, cultural coordinators—because of their own personal involvement in Aboriginal culture and tradition—do lead certain events, activities or services. Many also provide individual mentoring to offenders.

A final role of coordinators is their delivery of First Nations and Métis awareness training to correctional staff. Using a common curriculum on traditions, history, treaties, challenges, social concerns and racism, the cultural coordinators provide annual mandatory training to all new recruits in both the adult and young offender facilities. Several management-level correctional staff also take the training. The purpose of this training is to provide correctional staff with a better understanding of the unique history and experience of First Nation and Métis people so that they can provide better services to Aboriginal offenders.

At the time of this review, 8 cultural coordinators are in place. Adult facilities with a cultural coordinator include Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre, Saskatoon Provincial

Correctional Centre, Pine Grove Provincial Correctional Centre and Regina Provincial Correctional Centre. On the young offender side, North Battleford Youth Centre shares a coordinator with Drumming Hill Youth Centre; Kilburn Hall Youth Centre shares a coordinator with Yarrow Youth Farm; and Paul Dojack Youth Centre shares a coordinator with Echo Valley Youth Centre. There is currently a vacant cultural coordinator position at Orcadia Youth Residence.

Mentioned several times already, the second contingent of the program's personnel are the cultural advisors. In all institutions, advisors are contracted through a fair, open, and transparent process that is respectful of Aboriginal tradition and protocol. Contracts with cultural advisors are based upon hourly remuneration with a minimum term of one year. The hours of advisors are determined by each institution's cultural budget and program needs, as well as the availability and interests of each advisor.

Over the past few years, the role of cultural advisors has changed quite a bit. In the beginning they were generally brought in to run a sweat lodge ceremony. Now they provide regular, and often times, daily assistance in the development and delivery of holistic healing programs and services for offenders.

The general expectations of advisors are that they provide individual mentoring or group support, lead cultural activities and guide spiritual events. Cultural advisors are also asked to provide a variety of teachings and knowledge-sharing opportunities that lead to cultural awareness. Much of the work of advisors surrounds individual or group activities that help inmates build strength in all four aspects of the traditional medicine wheel: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

A common trait among advisors contracted to Saskatchewan Corrections is that they have strong cultural ties to their community. The strengths, stories and teachings they acquired along their own personal journeys are what make them an important resource to offenders participating in cultural programs. Having strong connections with other cultural leaders in First Nation and Métis communities brings added-value to the important contributions they make in this program.

At the time of this report, most adult and young offender facilities have contracts with several cultural advisors. The number of hours each facility provides services from a cultural advisor also varies. These are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Number of Advisors/Monthly Hours of Service by Provincial Correctional Institutions

INSTITUTION	N	# of HOURS
Prince Albert Correctional Centre	4	400
Saskatoon Correctional Centre	2	300
Pine Grove Correctional Centre	1	160
Regina Correctional Centre	3	320
Prince Albert Youth Residence	3	48
North Battleford Youth Centre	3	50
Drumming Hill Youth Centre	2	10
Killburn Hall Youth Centre	4	240
Yarrow Youth Farm	1	48
Orcadia Youth Residence	5	60
Echo Valley Youth Centre	1	64
Paul Dojack Youth Centre	1	48

2.2 Service Delivery

As highlighted earlier in this report, the development of cultural programming within Saskatchewan's provincial correctional institutions has been an evolving process. Most of the early work in cultural programming has been in the young offender facilities. Elder visits, particular ceremonies and periodic cultural events and learning activities characterized much of the services offered to young offenders. On the adult side, similar services became available when coordinators and advisors were contracted to attend the institution on a daily (regular) basis. Within both adult and young offender institutions, the simultaneous development of lesson plans on Aboriginal history, culture and tradition helped to make the delivery of cultural programming more systematic and organized.

Overtime, various components to each institution's cultural programming have been changed, added or removed. Alterations to programming are largely affected by the needs and interests of offenders, the experiences and abilities of program staff, and the capacity of each institution to deliver such services. Currently, a majority of institutions have a mixed approach to delivering cultural services. This means that they provide opportunities for offenders to participate in cultural ceremonies, deliver classroom-based learning sessions, and offer inmates one-on-one time with a cultural advisor or the coordinator.

At the core of this service is individual mentoring. Upon request by the offender (or referral by corrections staff), cultural coordinators and advisors spend one-on-one time with the offender. These sessions come in many different types and serve a variety of purposes. In some cases, offenders spend individual time with program staff to learn about their culture, to receive some spiritual support or simply seek guidance in traditional ways. In other cases, offenders ask to see program staff to discuss problems they are having with grief, anger, hostility, fear or depression. Program staff are not trained in counselling, nor do they pretend to be professional

counsellors. They simply spend time with offenders to offer some culturally relevant support and advice.

A second major group of services offered in all correctional institutions are cultural ceremonies and events that occur daily, monthly or periodically. Examples of these activities include smudging, sharing or healing circles, medicine gathering, singing and drumming, traditional feasts and sweats. On occasion, there are also opportunities for offenders to participate in cultural camps, pipe ceremonies, pow wows, and various traditional dances.

One of the more systematic components of cultural programming at most institutions is the group learning opportunities that are most commonly provided in a classroom setting. Generally, these types of learning opportunities are provided in scheduled intervals over a number of days or weeks. For example, several institutions have a five to six week Aboriginal learning course that is offered a number of times throughout the year. These are usually taught by a contracted facilitator. Other institutions provide periodic learning from guest presenters. Topics covered in these group learning opportunities include Aboriginal history, land claims, the Indian Act, residential school, the reserve system, cultural ceremony, traditional parenting, life skills, drumming, cultural crafts, traditional teachings, and cultural protocol, among many others.

A fourth component to cultural programming in most institutions is a cultural escort service. In most cases, where an inmate has the sufficient level of risk required to leave an institution, the cultural coordinator will escort the inmate out of the institution. Situations where this would occur include medicine gathering, wakes or funerals, culture camps, and various community events.

Within the provincial correctional system, Aboriginal cultural programming is offered to all inmates—regardless of ethnicity or spiritual belief. Individual access to one-on-one support and permission to participate in learning opportunities or cultural activities are determined by offender behaviour and status of risk. Another determining factor of inmate involvement in cultural programming is the availability of program staff and institutional capacity to provide such programming.

Involvement in cultural programming is completely voluntary. No inmates are forced to receive or participate in cultural programming. However, when inmates voluntarily sign-up for classroom-based programming, they are expected to attend each class throughout the duration of the course.

In terms of site delivery, there is considerable variation in the types of cultural programming offered at each institution. Using information gathered from both internal documents of Saskatchewan Corrections and knowledge gathered through meetings with cultural coordinators, the research team was able to gather the following information on each institution involved in First Nations and Métis Cultural Programs. It is important to note that individual mentoring is offered at all institutions, and therefore not shown in the following

table. Also not shown in the table is daily or weekly smudging. All institutions, with some variation, are able to provide smudging opportunities to their inmates.

Table 2: Cultural Program Services by Institution*

Level	Institution	Services
Young Offender	Paul Dojack Youth Centre	group learning on cultural teachings and the medicine wheel; 6 week cultural-based program that helps youth develop personal qualities and values; teachings on Aboriginal heritage; sweat lodge; round dance; traditional feasts
	Echo Valley Youth Centre	arts classes; story-telling; crafts; cultural-based life skills; healing circles; traditional feasts
	Kilburn Hall Youth Centre	cultural wellness classes; Cree language instruction; First Nation treaties; talking circles; language instruction; pow wow; traditional dancing class; cultural crafts; pipe ceremony; sweat lodge
	North Battleford Youth Centre	school curriculum-based Aboriginal studies coursework; culture camps; traditional feasts; spiritual ceremonies; Cree language instruction; talking circles; traditional stories; drumming; pow wow singing; cultural crafts; pipe ceremony; sweat lodge
	Orcadia Youth Residence	group learning on Aboriginal culture, respect and lifestyle; contemporary issues facing First Nations and Métis people; ceremony protocol; cultural crafts; sacred teachings; cultural life skills; traditional cooking; cultural identity; sweat lodge
	Prince Albert Youth Residence	talking circles; ceremony protocol; cultural crafts; drum making; pow wow singing; drumming group; traditional medicines
Adult	Prince Albert Correctional Centre	spiritual-based self-help group; classroom-based program on Aboriginal history and politics, intergenerational trauma, cultural ceremonies, protocol with Elders, and personal goal-setting; traditional feasts; sweat lodge; pipe ceremony
	Saskatoon Correctional Centre	medicine wheel teachings; traditional parenting program; creative writing; cultural art classes; sweat lodge; hide tanning; pipe ceremony; medicine gathering; traditional feasts; tipi teachings
	Regina Correctional Centre	four-week cultural healing program that covers Aboriginal history, the treaties, reserve system, residential schooling, contemporary issues, Aboriginal nutrition, healthy relationships, anger resolution, personal ego and problem ownership; tipi teachings on the values of respect, humility, kinship and sharing; medicine wheel teachings; traditional parenting workshops; traditional protocols; drumming; father support group; talking circles; cultural crafts; sweat lodge
	Pine Grove Correctional Centre	two week classroom-based program focused on using First Nations culture in healing the mind, body and spirit; sweat lodge; healing circles; knowledge-sharing on community healing practices; learning opportunities in traditional medicines; story-telling; two week classroom-based program on self-understanding, the impact of residential schools and addiction on family violence and incarceration; Turtle ceremony; pipe ceremony; medicine gathering; traditional feast

* Information in this table represents previous and current services offered at Saskatchewan's correctional institutions.

2.3 Program Facilities

One major factor in being able to provide a variety of cultural supports and services to offenders is actual infrastructure. Being able to secure a private, non-interrupted, culturally-appropriate space to hold group learning events, cultural activities or provide one-on-one support to inmates is largely dependent upon the physical space to do so. Like cultural programming, there is also variation in the types of program facilities across Saskatchewan's various institutions.

While the quality of cultural facilities is discussed in more detail within the findings section of this report, the following table provides a summary of the facilities available to cultural programming in each institution.

Table 3: Cultural Program Facilities By Institution

Level	Institution	Facility Description
Young Offender	Paul Dojack Youth Centre	no cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; access to shared private room for individual mentoring; cultural room for group work
	Echo Valley Youth Centre	no cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; access to shared private room for individual mentoring
	Kilburn Hall Youth Centre	independent cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; private cultural room for individual mentoring; all-season sweat lodge
	North Battleford Youth Centre	independent cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; private cultural room for individual mentoring; cultural room for group work; all-season sweat lodge
	Orcadia Youth Residence	no cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; access to shared private room for individual mentoring; cultural room for group work
	Prince Albert Youth Residence	no cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; access to shared private room for individual mentoring
Adult	Prince Albert Correctional Centre	older construction trailer with only two private rooms for four advisors; all-season sweat lodge; access to classroom space shared with other programs
	Saskatoon Correctional Centre	older construction trailer with two private rooms for two advisors; all-season sweat lodge; access to classroom space shared with other programs
	Regina Correctional Centre	independent cultural building; access to classroom space; private room for individual mentoring; all-season sweat lodge
	Pine Grove Correctional Centre	no cultural building; access to classroom space shared with other programs; access to one private room for 2 staff to provide individual mentoring; seasonal sweat lodge

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In designing the methodology of this review, the research team met with staff from the Ministry of Corrections and Policing to determine their goals and objectives of having a review completed on FNMP. Considerable discussion occurred around a number of different approaches. One option included measurement of program outcomes, and in particular the impact of cultural programming on offender behaviour. While an impact study may be useful in the future, there is not a clear enough understanding of the current cultural programs to allow for a proper outcome methodology to be executed. Another option included a focus on finding techniques to provide an improved cultural program. With respect to identifying best practices in cultural programming, once again it is critical to examine what is currently being provided before we can compare alternatives.

Bearing these issues in mind, all parties agreed that a descriptive review of First Nations and Métis programming was the best alternative. Considering the broad variation in cultural programming across the province, the lack of a systematic data collection process, and an incomplete understanding of how cultural services are presently being provided, a number of questions were designed to guide this review process. These include:

- What services are being delivered by the cultural programs within each institution?
- How can we maintain an ongoing understanding of how cultural services are being provided within each institution?
- How are types of services determined?
- What characteristics describe the providers of cultural services?
- How are the cultural and spiritual needs of offenders being met by these services?
- What are the challenges in delivering cultural programming?
- What are the successful benefits of FNMP being offered within the institutions?
- How can the delivery of cultural programming be improved?
- How can FNMP move towards a common service framework without sacrificing quality and effectiveness?

4.0 METHODOLOGY

In answering these questions, a methodology has been developed to generate a rich and informative understanding of FNMP. Essentially, there are two parts to this methodology. The first involves a qualitative analysis of feedback from cultural advisors and coordinators on their understanding of cultural programming—at least from within their own institution. The second involves the development and implementation of a program monitoring system which allows cultural coordinators to collect program and individual level data on the cultural services delivered within their institutions. In addition to these two methods, the research team reviewed internal documents provided by the Ministry of Corrections and Policing.

4.1 Qualitative Methods

The qualitative portion of this methodology involved interviews and focus groups with cultural coordinators and advisors over a 9-month period. To begin gathering basic information on program delivery, the research team conducted preliminary interviews with cultural coordinators at FNMP's annual Elder's Gathering in February of 2012. During these preliminary interviews, staff were asked the following questions:

- What is your role and history with cultural programs in your institution?
- What cultural services are provided in your institution?
- Do you currently keep information on cultural services provided? If so, how?
- What information/training/direction have you received from management concerning the development and facilitation of your cultural services?
- In your opinion, what is the response of offenders to cultural programming in your institution?

The information gathered during these preliminary interviews provided the research team with a basic understanding of how cultural programs function, but more so, how much variation actually exists between different institutions in delivering cultural services.

The next step in this qualitative methodology was to design interview guides for cultural advisors and coordinators that could effectively solicit dialogue on issues that this review is concerned with (see appendices). The questions for advisors were grouped into three separate categories: cultural services, administration and looking forward. The goal of interviewing advisors was to gather their perspective of how cultural services are delivered, how cultural leaders in the community become advisors and what ideas they have to move FNMP forward in a positive direction.

Questions asked of coordinators were also grouped into the above-mentioned categories, plus some additional categories: release planning and offenders. The goal of interviewing cultural coordinators was to gain a better understanding of some of the complexities surrounding cultural programming—particularly with respect to factors that may support or serve as a barrier to effective cultural programming.

Prior to each interview, both coordinators and advisors were told that their participation in the review process would be voluntary and that their responses to all questions would remain confidential and anonymous. All respondents involved in the interview process verbally provided their informed consent to the research team at the beginning of their interviews. In total, 9 cultural coordinators, 11 cultural advisors, and 1 program director from FNMP participated in the interview process.

Interviews were conducted in-person and on-site with respondents in a one-on-one arrangement. On average, most interviews lasted 90 minutes. Some however stretched to 3 and sometimes 4 hours. On the adult side of corrections, cultural program staff were interviewed from Pine Grove Correctional Centre, Prince Albert Correctional Centre, Saskatoon Correctional Centre and Regina Correctional Centre. On the young offender side, interviews were conducted with staff from North Battleford Youth Centre, Paul Dojack Youth Centre, Kilburn Hall Youth Centre, Prince Albert Youth Residence and Orcadia Youth Residence. The interview with the FNMP director was held in Prince Albert.

The third step in the qualitative portion of this review involved a focus group with cultural advisors in June of 2012. During a gathering of FNMP staff, a group of 23 cultural advisors (including Elders) met to participate in a discussion about their experiences in helping deliver culture services and support within their institutions. The group discussion was centred around two questions:

- (a) What are the challenges in providing cultural programming within your institution?
- (b) What would improve the delivery of cultural programming within your institution?

Data gathered from all interviews and the focus group were analysed using basic content analysis. While the research team was cognizant of the main research questions driving this review, they also looked for emerging themes and trends perhaps unrelated to the main questions. This allowed for additional information to be included in the findings of this review.

4.2 Quantitative Methods

The second half of this methodology involved a collaborative effort of both the research team and cultural coordinators from each institution. At the early stages of this review, it became clear that although cultural coordinators submit program reports every 6 months, no consistent data were being gathered between the institutions. While some kept information on the activities that individual offenders engaged in, others simply accumulated head counts of all

offenders participating in cultural programming. There was a collective desire among cultural coordinators that a more useful and consistent reporting system be developed and implemented within FNMP.

To begin that process, a representative from the research team held a working group with the program director and 9 cultural coordinators. During this meeting, participants were informed that the goal of the working group was to identify a means by which cultural staff can gather and store information on program delivery. The intent would be for this information to reflect which cultural services were provided, which inmates received these cultural services, and how often these services were delivered.

To help initiate discussion around these themes, the research team posed a number of questions:

- Do you feel that keeping information on programs and services delivered through the FNMP is important? Why?
- What pieces of information do you feel is important to collect? What about data on services, data on individual support received, data on services/support delivered to individual offenders?
- What methods of data collection would work for you?
- How can we develop consistent data collection methods across all programs?
- What data storage and sharing process will effectively help us manage and collate program data?

During the working group meeting, it was determined that data would best be gathered using a small number of instruments, and stored on a Microsoft Excel file. With respect to variables for which program staff would gather data on, the group listed all of the services, programs and events that they held in their own institutions. Collectively, the group worked with the research team to narrow down these various activities and group them into three categories: group learning opportunities, cultural activities and individual mentoring. As Table 4 illustrates, the types of cultural services offered is diverse. While the group tried to make this list of variables all-inclusive, there is still a need to include *other* as a variable for certain events or activities that do not fit into the common ones listed herein.

Table 4: Data Dictionary for Program and Individual Level Variables by Category

CATEGORY	TYPE	EXAMPLES	MEASUREMENT	
Group Learning Opportunities	traditional parenting	child-rearing; family stress	# of attendees; # of sessions	
	traditional life skills	cooking; planning		
	aboriginal studies	history; treaties; politics; residential schools		
	language	Cree; Dené		
	tipi teachings	respect, humility, kinship and sharing		
	story telling	traditional		
	medicine wheel teachings	health of mind, body, spirit and emotion		
	hide preparation	moose; buffalo		
	cultural crafts	dream catchers; drums; paintings		
	creative writing	cultural; poems; stories		
Cultural Activities	other	na	# of attendees; # of activities	
	cultural camps	intensive cultural learning; skill building		
	medicine gathering	sweet grass; sage; willows		
	singing/drumming	pow wow singing; ceremony drumming		
	community ceremonial event	pow wow; round dance; sun dance		
	talking circle	healing through sharing		
	traditional feasts	meal with traditional foods; high attendance		
	sweats	ceremony in sweat lodge		
	pipe ceremony	na		
	turtle ceremony	na		
	full moon ceremony	na		
Individual Mentoring Topics	story telling	traditional; spiritual	# of sessions provided	
	other	na		
	abuse	na		
	spiritual guidance			
	cultural knowledge			
	health			
	death/loss/grief			
	gangs			
	personal crisis			
	relationships			
	case management			
	residential schooling			
	communications			
	behavior			
	goal-setting			
	stress management			
	decision-making			
	parent/family issues			
	substance abuse			
	community supports			
	self-esteem			
	personal awareness			
	other			

To collect information on the variables listed in Table 4, the research team used input from cultural coordinators to help design three data collection instruments. After each type of service is provided to either groups of offenders or simply individual offenders, program staff are asked to record information on that service.

In the event that the services staff provide to offenders are categorized as a group learning opportunity or a cultural activity, staff are to complete a *Participant Activity Sheet*. This form captures the event type, number of participants at the event, and names and identification numbers of each participant. Also on the sheet is a space asking for the date, institution and cultural staff member who facilitated or oversaw the event (see Figure 1; for larger version see appendices).

Figure 1: Participant Activity Sheet

First Nations and Métis Programs Adult and Youth Corrections		PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET			
CATEGORY	TYPE	# of Participants	# of Offenders	PARTICIPANT NAMES	PRISONER ID #
Group Learning	Traditional parenting				
	Traditional life skills				
	Aboriginal studies				
	Language				
	Tipi teachings				
	Story telling				
	Medicine wheel				
	Hide preparation				
	Crafts				
	Creative writing				
<i>Other</i>					
Cultural Participation	Cultural camps				
	Medicine gathering				
	Singing/drumming				
	Community event				
	Talking circle				
	Feasts				
	Sweats				
	Pipe ceremony				
	Turtle ceremony				
	Full moon ceremony				
<i>Other</i>					
Advisor/Coordinator Name: _____ Institution: _____ Date: _____					

In the event that program staff provide individual mentoring to offenders, a separate form is used to capture the name, prisoner identification number, staff mentor and mentoring topic. Whereas the Participant Activity Sheet is to be used to record information on only one program activity, the *Individual Mentoring Sheet* can be used to capture information from multiple mentoring sessions with multiple offenders over a one week time period. This feature allows advisors or coordinators to gather information on the same piece of paper throughout their work week (see Figure 2; for larger version see appendices).

Figure 2: Individual Mentoring Sheet

First Nations and Métis Programs – Adult and Youth Corrections INDIVIDUAL MENTORING SHEET							Government of Saskatchewan	
Mentoring Code								
1–abuse	5–death/loss/grief	9–case management	13–goal-setting	17–substance abuse				
2–spiritual guidance	6–gangs	10–residential school	14–stress management	18–community supports				
3–cultural teaching	7–personal crisis	11–communication help	15–decision-making	19–self-esteem				
4–health	8–relationships	12–behaviour	16–parent/family issues	20–personal awareness				
Month: _____		Week: _____		Institution: _____				
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	
Name:								
ID#:								
Advisor:								
Code:								
Name:								
ID#:								
Advisor:								
Code:								
Name:								
ID#:								
Advisor:								
Code:								
Name:								
ID#:								
Advisor:								
Code:								
Name:								
ID#:								
Advisor:								
Code:								

As information is gathered using these two data collection instruments, cultural coordinators are asked to collate the data using a *Weekly Total Sheet*. The purpose of this instrument is to simply help coordinators tally up the overall number of activities provided each week, along with the number of offenders who participated in each activity (see Figure 3; for larger version see appendices).

Figure 3: Weekly Total Sheet

First Nations and Métis Programs		Adult and Youth Corrections										Weekly Total Sheet (Same Month Only)		
Category	Type	WEEK:										WEEK TOTALS		
		Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				Count	Total	
Group Learning	Traditional parenting													
	Traditional life skills													
	Aboriginal studies													
	Language													
	Tipi teachings													
	Story telling													
	Medicine wheel													
	Hike preparation													
	Crafts													
	Creative Writing													
Cultural Participation	Other													
	Cultural camps													
	Medicine gathering													
	Singing Drumming													
	Community event													
	Talking circle													
	Feasts													
	Sweats													
	Pipe ceremony													
	Turde ceremony													
Individual Mentoring	Full moon ceremony													
	Other													
	Abuse													
	Spiritual guidance													
	Cultural teachings													
	Health													
	Death/Loss/Grief													
	Gangs													
	Personal Crisis													
	Relationships													
Advisory Services	Case Management													
	Residential School													
	Communication Help													
	Behaviour													
	Goal-setting													
	Stress management													
	Decision-making													
	Parent/family issues													
	Substance abuse													
	Community support													
Community Services	Self-esteem													
	Personal awareness													
	Other													
	Advocate													
	Advocacy													
	Advise													
	Advise													
	Advise													
	Advise													
	Advise													
Advisor/Coordinator Name: _____		Institution: _____												

When it comes to transferring information from the hard copy instruments to the database, there are two main steps. The first is to code *program level data* and the second is to code *participant level data*.

With respect to the former, the weekly total columns from the *Weekly Total Sheet* can be directly inserted into the corresponding weekly count and weekly participation columns on the program level spreadsheet of the Excel database. The database is pre-programmed to generate monthly and annual sums of these program activities.

Regarding the latter, cultural coordinators store information from both the *Participant Activity Sheet* and the *Individual Mentoring Sheet* on the participant level spreadsheet in the Excel database. The first few columns of the participant level spreadsheet store fixed information on each offender. This includes their name, identification number, institution, custody type, unit, start date in cultural programming and end date in cultural programming (which is usually their release date).

Following basic identifier information, columns for each of the service types in all three categories are provided. The data stored in these columns is cumulative. In other words, each offender's total receipt of services increases numerically as they continue to receive additional services of that particular type. Data on offender participation in Group Learning Opportunities and Cultural Activities are taken from the two right-hand columns of the *Participant Activity Sheet* while data on offender mentoring services are retrieved from rows in the *Individual Mentoring Sheet*.

A final piece of data that is stored on the Excel database concerns requests that offenders make to see the cultural coordinator or cultural advisor. Generally, each cultural coordinator receives signed request slips from offenders. In other cases—particularly in young offender institutions—institutional staff will refer offenders to the cultural program to receive some cultural or spiritual support. As coordinators gather request slips from individuals, they can enter these numbers onto the far right columns of the participant level spreadsheet in the Excel database. Likewise, as requests are fulfilled, coordinators can enter the number of requests to which they responded. On the program level spreadsheet, coordinators can also keep weekly and monthly totals of requests received and requests that were responded to for the entire institution.

Following the design of this data collection process, a lengthy orientation phase allowed for cultural program staff to become familiar with the requirements of implementing the program monitoring process for FNMP. Through various site visits, group orientation sessions and telephone calls, the research team provided cultural coordinators with instructions in how to implement the program monitoring process, as well as ongoing technical support and assistance.

A number of institutions were able to start collecting data as early as April of 2012. Since then, additional institutions have begun to implement program monitoring into the day-to-day operations of their cultural program.

For the purposes of this review, data from four different institutions were gathered from the participant and program level spreadsheets between April of 2012 and January of 2013. Included in the results of this review are simple descriptive totals of the activities provided and the number of offenders engaged in each activity. Also included in this review is a brief look at request response rates among the three institutions.

Overall, the quantitative data collection process has served as one part of this review. However it also serves a longer-lasting purpose within FNMP. The program monitoring process described herein helps cultural program staff monitor what services individual offenders receive from the cultural program. It can also be used as a means to continuously measure the extent to which particular activities or services are provided, as well as which offenders are receiving certain types of cultural and spiritual support. Although cultural coordinators are most involved in the collection and storage of these data, information from the analysis of cultural program data can be used by a number of parties:

- Cultural coordinators can use information to help plan and develop cultural programming.
- Cultural advisors can use this information to help monitor and manage their client needs.
- Institutional managers can see what cultural services are provided, which services are most in demand and who is receiving them.
- The Ministry of Corrections and Policing can see ongoing progress of FNMP in each institution.

5.0 RESULTS

The results of this review are broken into two separate sections. Those that were generated through the interview and focus group phase of the process are presented as qualitative data. Results from the analysis of data gathered through the implementation of the FNMP program monitoring system are presented in the quantitative portion of this section. While the qualitative results provide a rich and in-depth understanding of the different topics explored in the review, the quantitative results provide a numerical account of services provided to offenders in several institutions.

5.1 Interviews and Focus Group

The interviews with cultural coordinators, and both interviews and the focus group with cultural advisors, allowed the research team to gather some very descriptive information about FNMP. Through this process, narrative data were gathered on a broad range of topics. Results from the qualitative part of the methodology are presented in specific categories. While basic observations of the data are reported in this section, interpretations of the results are reserved for the findings section of this report.

Cultural Services and Supports

Of the specific services that both advisors and coordinators offer offenders, a majority can fit into three different categories: individual mentoring, group learning and cultural participation. Several respondents described individual mentoring as an opportunity to help offenders understand their choices in life, be honest with themselves and to focus on things that will help them become better individuals. Some advisors report sharing personal stories with offenders: “this helps the guys see that they can also fix themselves—but on their own time”. Other advisors explain that in an effort to help individual offenders with their personal problems, they often share their own teachings. Many rely on smudging and traditional prayers with the creator to help the offender become calm, gain focus, and develop an understanding of the source of their problems and ways to overcome such personal challenges.

In the area of group learning, advisors and coordinators report that many sessions are geared towards helping offenders acquire knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of the Aboriginal world. Learning opportunities on history, skill-building, traditions, decision-making and behaviour modification—all within a culturally appropriate context, constitute much of the group learning activities offered through FNMP. In describing these sessions, some respondents spoke of their efforts to help offenders make better choices before they hit rock-bottom. Others outlined their efforts to help offenders realize that they can't beat the system. Instead, they should work with the system, embrace the good teachings offered in programming, and try to make better decisions in their life.

Finally, the different opportunities of cultural participation made available to offenders include individual and group healing ceremonies, sweats, smudging, talking ceremonies, pow wows,

ceremonial dances, pipe ceremonies, sweats and community gatherings. In addition to participating in ceremonies, offenders are provided with opportunities to learn about traditional ceremonies, how to approach Elders and how to find an Aboriginal way of life both inside and outside of the institution.

Release Planning

Another major activity that cultural staff are involved in is release planning with other professionals from the correctional institution. In offering their perspectives on this topic, many cultural coordinators describe their role in release planning to involve communication with First Nation Bands to discuss inmate needs and community expectations prior to release.

This exchange also offers cultural coordinators an opportunity to explore cultural supports in the local community. In working with other institutional staff to develop reintegration plans, several respondents reported that it is much easier to find offenders support in the offender's own home communities as opposed to other areas of the province. Similarly, a different coordinator described the difficulty that they have connecting offenders to cultural supports in urban areas: "it is much easier to find supports for offenders in on-reserve communities than it is to find them in urban areas. When they are released into an urban centre, many of them have no connections and no means to attend ceremonies or sweats that occur back on the reserve".

When it comes to the challenges encountered during release planning, cultural coordinators were able to name a few. The first is not knowing who to call in First Nation communities. Many of the reintegration agreements previously signed between the Ministry and local Bands have expired. As such, it makes it somewhat more difficult to identify who in each community can offer cultural support. Compounding this issue, according to some respondents, is that there are not a lot of cultural supports in most communities. In fact, the further North a community is located, the less likely it will have cultural support available to released offenders. The consequence of these limitations is that release planners are often unable to find offenders support in the community when they are ready to be released.

One challenge particularly prevalent in release planning for young offenders is the fact that many youth have never been exposed to their own culture until they came to jail. As such, helping them get connected and stay connected with cultural supports once they are home is often a challenge. At the community level, another issue with respect to young offenders is the bad perception that communities have of deviant youth. As one coordinator felt, "we need to work extra hard to try and change those perceptions so that there is more access to culture for kids".

Offender Participation

When it comes to the delivery of cultural programming, there are a variety of methods that cultural staff use to recruit participants. Sign-up sheets, referrals from staff and individual

request slips are the most common. Other means of recruitment include posters, word of mouth, personal invites, and referral by other inmates.

Although cultural staff are prepared to provide services to all offenders, there are a number of factors which determine an inmate's ability to participate in cultural programming. The most significant factor is the offender's level of security risk. In many facilities, higher-risk offenders are not allowed to participate in cultural programming and services. Another determinant is the collective demand or interest of offenders in a given program or service. As one advisor explained, "we are only allowed a certain amount of time within each unit so the more interest there is, the less time each individual inmate has with the service".

A more systemic determinant of access to programming concerns correctional workers. One respondent claimed that "when corrections staff are on breaks, or are short-staffed, our cultural activities get put on the back burner. We have to wait, and there is only so much time. We have to see people unit by unit, it's really not conducive to the needs of inmates and cultural staff".

In some facilities, another determinant of cultural participation is if the inmate signs and abides by a behavioural contract that ties them to rules of the institution. Other factors affecting offender participation include a lack of appropriate space, gang problems, inner-jail conflict, and personal choice. In facilities with female offenders, cultural protocols themselves keep women out of certain cultural ceremonies when they are experiencing their moon period (menstrual cycle). Lastly, in some facilities there are institutional directives written, which outline criteria that inmates must meet to become an Elder helper or simply just participate in the program.

Offender Needs

As cultural advisors and coordinators discussed the services they provide to offenders, the research team asked them to talk about the ways in which they identify offender needs, and in turn, use their understanding of offender needs to develop appropriate cultural programming. Responses from cultural staff indicate that offender needs are identified through conversations with inmates themselves. Several cultural coordinators conduct initial interviews with new offenders to determine their cultural experiences, find out how important it is to them, see what they want to learn and identify where they would like their cultural experiences to take them. Other cultural coordinators work with both cultural advisors and correctional staff to build an understanding of inmate needs—which in turn influences the design of cultural programming. In addition, most institutions have an inmate request slip or referral process that allows both offenders and other institutional staff to directly communicate to cultural staff the general or specific needs of offenders.

When it comes to the actual design of cultural programming, many FNMP staff report that they work within their own experiences and abilities to meet inmate needs. Clearly, they are also limited by budgeting and facility space in trying to meet these needs. Many respondents

indicate that they consult with both Elders and clinical staff to see how cultural supports can be designed to meet offender needs. Once this is done, they run program ideas by both the institutional manager and director of FNMP.

Another tool used by some cultural staff is a scan of cultural programs in other jurisdictions and regions to determine the types of programming that matches specific inmate needs. They also inquire about the types of supports offered in home communities of offenders. As one respondent explained, “we try to give them access to cultural programming that they can access in their home community after release”.

Overall, cultural staff examine the individual and collective needs of offenders and try to design programming around those needs. This may occur in the form of spiritual ceremonies, group learning events or individual mentoring.

Impact of Cultural Programs on Offenders

While implementing cultural programs, one of the benefits that cultural advisors and coordinators enjoy is an opportunity to see first-hand, the impact of cultural services and supports on offenders. When asked to provide dialogue on this topic, most respondents found this to be an easy task.

Their answers indicate that offenders enjoy participating in cultural programming because it reinstalls a sense of hope and self-importance, no matter what they have done. Many inmates feel pride in themselves and in their own culture.

With respect to behaviour, many cultural staff report that when offenders participate in cultural programming they are provided with a sense of peace that calms them down. One advisor commented that “there is a lot of tension between the staff and offenders. But when the Elder is around that tension is gone. There is automatic respect across the institution when the Elders walk in”. Illustrating the impact of cultural opportunities on offenders, another advisor provided a quote from an inmate: “you know I almost forgot that I’m in jail when we do beading or have a sharing circle. It brings us back to our roots”.

With respect to individual mentoring, cultural staff report that offenders come for knowledge, for peace of mind and for help. Sometimes they just need someone to listen to them, and to help them see a world beyond the street. As one advisor explained, “they learn important lessons, it gives them a chance to share—to talk about the important things in their lives”. A different advisor felt that offenders feel respected and happy when they get to spend individual time with program staff. During the one-on-one sessions, several advisors felt that offenders felt respected by the honour that they were given. Most importantly, as one respondent claimed, “time with the cultural staff allows offenders to share their emotions, to vent, to cry—these are things they won’t do in front of the other inmates”.

When it comes to group learning, one program staff member commented that “we try and tell inmates that they weren’t arrested, they were rescued. The life they were living out there will end them up dead”. Others felt that, during group teachings and lessons, offenders have shown they enjoy the values and teachings shared. One of the biggest things they get out of group programming may also be a chance to laugh. As one advisor noted, “we try to share laughter with them, it’s a big part of First Nations culture, and they don’t get much of that in their lives”.

Last but not least, the impact of cultural participation on offenders seems to be the most important impact. As several respondents observed, being able to participate in cultural ceremony and tradition brings a lot of strength to the individual—much of which comes from sharing such an experience with others. Illustrating this, one cultural coordinator explains that “when inmates hear what others talk about, and the similar experiences they share, they feel more comfortable opening up and letting the healing process begin”. Another respondent observed that “for those offenders who have approval to leave the institution, picking rocks, sage and logs makes them feel important and special”.

While belonging to a group is important, having the chance to actually experience culture is important in itself. As one cultural advisor explains, “offenders become spiritually awaken and culturally involved. In some occasions, they remain active in cultural activities after they are released”. A different advisor shared a similar observation: “giving young people practical cultural experiences is important, it helps them learn to participate in things that are positive and important to them”.

Challenges in Delivering Cultural Programs and Support Services

Despite all honest efforts, there are some challenges in delivering cultural programming. There are a number of categories in which these problems can be grouped.

Some of the *systemic* issues raised by respondents include a lack of advisor access to certain parts of a jail due to security measures—this makes it very difficult for cultural staff to offer programs and prepare sweats. Another systemic issue is the demand for inmates to conform to their regular daytime programming schedules. In most institutions, core correctional programs take precedent over cultural programs. Even if offenders submit a request slip to see an advisor, they are generally expected to stay in their regular programming. This results in a backlog of offenders for cultural advisors to try and see in a short time period. The consequence is that many inmates feel that their request slips are not being responded to.

Another systemic barrier is the communication process required to successfully promote a cultural event or activity. Shift changes among correctional staff and the reluctance or forgetfulness of correctional workers to submit event sign-up sheets to the cultural staff is a barrier to offender participation in cultural activities. A final systemic issue is that occupational health and safety concerns prevent cultural staff from smudging indoors.

Other challenges in delivering cultural services and supports concern *relations* between correctional staff and cultural staff. For the most part, cultural staff receive tremendous support from corrections professionals in the institutions. Much of this support has increased offender access to cultural services, and has made the work of cultural staff much easier.

In a few cases however, respondents reported some difficulties in working with a small number of correctional workers. According to a few cultural staff, there is variation in the respect that correctional staff show towards traditional Aboriginal ways. As one respondent commented, “some correctional workers don’t see this as a program to help people”. Another explained that “some guards see cultural programming as a privilege and pull kids out of sweats or ceremonies if they act up. You don’t see them pulling kids out of addictions or anger management, but they will pull them from cultural programming because they don’t see it as a tool to help offenders”. Similarly, one advisor observed that “new recruits have a better understanding of inmates, their culture, history and where they came from. Some of the longer-term guards don’t see the merit and benefits that cultural programming brings to the correctional environment”.

A different complaint about some correctional workers was that “a few of the guards put us under a microscope, as if we’re doing something we’re not supposed to be doing”. Another respondent felt that “managers don’t understand the importance of humour and laughing in First Nations culture. They think we’re jerking around rather than programming just because we’re trying to share some laughs with the inmates”.

Another problem area discussed by cultural staff is the *inefficiencies* of the program, which are caused by a lack of personnel and resources. One respondent suggested that inmates feel cultural staff are not getting their request slips. This comes from the fact that there is seldom enough time to see all of the offenders in one week because of limitations in space and advisor hours. As one respondent explained, “in many cases, we have more inmates that request cultural guidance than we have time, space and advisors. We have tried to offer more healing circles but many inmates are not comfortable talking about things in front of others. They would prefer individual time with an Elder”. As a result, it is difficult manage all of the individual needs of offenders.

Other challenges stemming from a lack of resources include no opportunities for advisors to receive training because they are considered *contractors* and not *staff*; lost time that coordinators spend writing funding proposals and budgets; and limitations on the types and frequencies of cultural activities because of budgetary restraints.

Another issue within the program concerns diversity of cultural staff themselves. Most advisors are Cree. This is a consequence of the reality that coordinators are finding it very difficult to find Dené Elders who have traditional knowledge and who are available and interested in working at an institution. A related observation is that it is sometimes difficult to find any type of traditional Elder because many of them do not feel that cultural traditions should be practiced within an institution.

A final challenge concerns *inconsistent and sometimes lengthy remuneration periods* for cultural advisors. According to one respondent, waiting on the Ministry to compensate advisors for their time takes too long—especially for occasional advisors: “when we’re competing with local First Nation Bands and other community organizations for Elder involvement in our programs, this wait period for remuneration becomes a major problem”.

Cultural Program Staff

The next topic discussed by respondents concerned the skills and assets of cultural program staff themselves. According to interviewees, cultural coordinators tend to have a professional background in corrections or the human service sector. There is a general personal interest among cultural coordinators to see that offenders have the opportunity to receive support, guidance and knowledge from Aboriginal teachings and cultural traditions. All of the coordinators themselves are Aboriginal. As such, their efforts to deliver cultural support is more natural.

During the interview process, the role of cultural coordinators within FNMP was described to have many different functions. One is to build connections between the correctional system and the community. Another is to hire, direct and give support to cultural advisors within the institution. In a number of interviews, some of the same functions were listed by multiple respondents: create cultural programs, recruit offenders to cultural programming, bring in Elders and guest facilitators, liaise between Aboriginal offenders and correctional staff, manage service requests from inmates, gather and store program data, promote cultural awareness among institutional staff, and gather supplies and prepare for cultural activities.

With respect to advisors, they come from varied Aboriginal backgrounds. To be hired as an advisor, one must actively live a traditional lifestyle and hold teachings from Elders in the community. As a result, many advisors have been raised traditionally, and are singers and drummers at pow wows, pipe carriers, and helpers at various ceremonies. Some advisors have had their own share of struggles in life. However, overcoming addiction and troubles with the law have made them stronger, and all the more able to connect with offenders.

According to advisors, their role in FNMP is to provide inmates with opportunities to learn about and participate in Aboriginal culture, and while doing so, acquire some of the teachings that they may have missed out on earlier in life. Other understandings of the advisor role in cultural programming include: providing inmates with support and direction in trying to continue with a cultural lifestyle after they are released; providing offenders with culturally appropriate life lessons; and teaching them how to talk in a circle and how to share and help one another.

Recruiting Cultural Advisors

When it comes to recruiting advisors to deliver culture supports and services, there is variation in this process across the different institutions. Some coordinators post help-wanted

advertisements in local newspapers, while others work through word of mouth to find appropriate supports. Many work with cultural leaders in the Aboriginal communities to find Elders and individuals who have received a significant amount of cultural teachings.

Unfortunately, while some institutions are able to demonstrate some flexibility in the means by which they recruit advisors, more and more are resorting to job advertisements. A number of respondents took issue with this process. As one respondent explains, “having to advertise, require resumes and interviewing candidates is tough—and culturally inappropriate. If people are traditional, they will be humble and don’t write much on their resumes. The Western way of finding advisors doesn’t fit with the cultural traditions we’re trying to enhance”. Another respondent echoed that “the reality is, a true Elder does not advertise themselves. They will not come to you. We’re supposed to approach them”. Lastly, one respondent explained that “there’s a reason our culture is not in the books, we’re a people of oral teaching. As such, finding someone to teach our culture through the newspaper is not a good way to do things”.

An additional problem raised over the posting of advisor job advertisements relates to the difficulty of reaching Aboriginal cultural leaders through a newspaper to begin with: “the problem with posting in a newspaper is that the ideal advisors we would want to hire don’t always read the paper. We need to reach out to First Nation communities more and get a larger pool of people to draw from”.

Cultural Advisor-Coordinator Relations

With respect to the relationship between cultural advisors and coordinators, most of the feedback indicated a strong bond between each cohort. A group of advisors reveal that coordinators guide the activities of advisors and keep them informed of inmate needs. This relationship is very harmonious and the lines of authority are very respected. It was clear that between the advisors and coordinators, there is a genuine commitment to Aboriginal traditions, spirituality and culture. One potential consequence of the steady oversight that coordinators offer to advisors is that they end up spending a lot of time in the institution coordinating cultural activities. As one advisor suggested, “coordinators spend too much time in their office, they need to spend more time in the community with cultural leaders”.

Training of Cultural Staff

While cultural advisors are contracted to share their deep cultural knowledge, most have never worked in a correctional setting before. As such, when new advisors and coordinators come to an institution, there is a period of knowledge sharing which generally occurs in order for that individual to function within the institution. It was quite apparent among advisors that there is variation in the intensity and duration of the learning opportunities they receive when they begin working at a facility.

A small number of advisors explained that when they started, they participated in on-site correctional training and received a fairly comprehensive orientation of the institution. Others

were provided with education on gang awareness, some took counselling workshops and others were only given a brief tour of the facility with an overview of the main rules. Most however were provided with a basic orientation of how to work in the jail, which included an overview of directives concerning inmate security. They then often shadowed another advisor for a week until they became familiar with the role of advisors in the institution.

Suggested Improvements for First Nations and Métis Programs

A major topic of discussion with both advisors and coordinators was the improvements that could be made to the delivery of cultural programming. By far, the most-mentioned improvement was the need to increase advisor hours within institutions. Several advisors pointed out the difficulty they have keeping up with the request slips in the small amount of time they are in the facility each week. Another suggestion was not only to have more hours, but more flexible hours for advisors. This would allow them to come into work after offenders are done their core programming or when there are critical moments (e.g. death, family loss).

Finally, with respect to advisor hours, there needs to be greater flexibility within the institution to accommodate the individual mentoring needs of offenders. As one advisor commented: “if it has taken a while for an offender to open up and they’re in the middle of a cry, and the guards call him for a count or for supper, it really interrupts things. Healing takes time, you can’t put a schedule around it”. A different advisor mentions that “cultural teachings and one on one support take time, especially if offenders have questions. You can’t learn to be an Indian in two hours”.

A second common response to this topic was the suggestion of providing advisors with higher remuneration. As one respondent commented, “you’ll pay counsellors and psychologists big bucks because they went to school, but Elders spend a whole lifetime putting an effort into learning things. Thirty dollars an hour for an advisor is not enough. Traditional Elders won’t complain, they’ll just accept it. However we really should strive for better pay”.

Related to the last suggestion is that advisors should be compensated the same at all institutions. As one respondent explains, “it is important for the same resources and pay for advisors to be available at all institutions—regardless of whether it is a young offender or adult facility”.

With respect to institutional rules, two separate suggestions were presented. The first was that cultural advisors should be allowed to accompany offenders on temporary absences. This would help offenders better deal with their situations (i.e. funerals, medicine-picking). The other is that better communication between cultural advisors and correctional workers regarding offender needs should be facilitated. As one advisor sees things, “knowing what issues and/or problems are occurring with an inmate—whether they are fighting with the guards or other prisoners—would help us better understand the problems of an offender, so we can help them”.

Another major topic for improvement concerns resources and facilities. One of the most common recommendations was that all cultural programs be provided with a quiet, private place to smudge, sit and talk with offenders without interruption. All facilities should also have a cultural centre that is appropriate for both group learning and cultural participation. Another suggestion provided by a number of respondents was that inmates should be able to sweat in the winter months—which would require an indoor sweat lodge. Specific ideas from a few respondents outlined the need for cultural libraries, a flush toilet for cultural staff (instead of an outhouse) and computer access.

At the management level, a number of respondents felt that better communication and a more unified organization of cultural services within an institution would help improve FNMP. One suggestion was that regular meetings with institutional management, advisors and coordinators would reaffirm the direction of cultural programming within the institution. Other respondents observed that all institutions could benefit from more involvement and support of management in developing and promoting the cultural program. Similarly, one respondent commented that “it would be nice if corrections staff took the time to learn what we do, to see the benefits of First Nations culture for inmates”.

When it comes to the knowledge and skills of cultural staff, several respondents felt that more opportunities to learn from one another would benefit everyone: “we all work in little islands, it is important to know what cultural coordinators in other facilities are doing so we can learn from one another and collaborate”; “we need to provide advisors with training and capacity building opportunities”; “we need more intensive and advanced cultural training of coordinators—this would help them in their role of planning and program development”; and “both advisors and coordinators should be provided with training on effective program facilitation”.

Developing a Common Framework for FNMP

The last topic of discussion with cultural advisors and coordinators concerned the means by which the Ministry, in partnership with cultural staff, could foster a common service delivery framework for all cultural programming. This would allow for more consistent and equal access to cultural services, without impeding on effectiveness or relevance to local offender needs.

Overwhelmingly, both advisors and coordinators believed this process to be both important and necessary. Many however, did warn that such an endeavour would have to be carried out carefully, and would have to involve a lot of thought to the diverse cultural needs of Saskatchewan’s inmate population.

In offering their advice, respondents pointed out that the core purpose of the program should be to help inmates learn who they are as First Nations people so that they can begin to respect themselves. When this occurs, they can begin to show respect to others. There should be consistency in cultural programming, yet the delivery of these programs should allow for

localization of service delivery. Another important piece of the process would be to identify a way to attract cultural advisors with similar or at least comparable credentials.

One of the major cautions offered in the dialogue of respondents was that it is difficult to make things similar between services offered to young offenders and adults because the former are at different stages in their life journey. As such, cultural programs need to be adaptable to the age and even gender-specific needs of offenders.

At its core, most respondents felt that all facilities should provide offenders with access to sweat lodges and smudging, classroom-based programs on First Nations and Métis history and contemporary issues and individual mentoring with a cultural advisor.

5.2 Program Monitoring System

At the time of this review, several institutions have implemented the program monitoring process as it was designed by the research team in cooperation with FNMP. Although data are not available from all institutions, it is worth demonstrating the utility of this information. As such, to provide an example of how cultural program data can be analysed, both program and participant level data have been retrieved from Prince Albert Youth Residence, Pine Grove Correctional Centre, Prince Albert Correctional Centre and Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

These four institutions all received their orientation training on data collection around the same time period. Each institution also took advantage of ongoing technical support offered by the research team. The data made available to the research team by these four institutions are from April 2012 to January 2013. They represent the total count of each activity type as well as the total number of offenders participating in that particular activity.

As Table 5 reveals, there are a number of cultural services which have been implemented in all four institutions. Within *group learning* it appears that workshops on traditional crafts are commonly held. At Prince Albert Youth Residence and Saskatoon Correctional Centre, participants are engaging in hide preparation. Within *cultural participation* activities, talking circles and sweats are common across all three adult institutions, while sweats and singing/drumming are common in the youth residence. When it comes to *individual mentoring*, cultural program staff have helped offenders address a number of topic areas: health, death, loss or grief and personal crises. They have also provided them with guidance in goal-setting, decision-making and personal awareness. The most common topic covered during individual mentoring in all institutions was spiritual guidance and cultural knowledge.

Table 5: Cultural Service Delivery by Activity Type and Institution

Category	Activity Type	Institution*							
		PAYR		PGCC		PACC		SCC	
Count	N	Count	N	Count	N	Count	N	Count	N
Group Learning Opportunities	Traditional parenting	0	0	0	0	4	30	10	57
	Traditional life skills	0	0	0	0	8	69	56	227
	Aboriginal studies	0	0	0	0	74	647	10	46
	Language	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	0
	Tipi teachings	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Story telling	0	0	0	0	75	682	28	134
	Medicine wheel teachings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hide preparation	17	63	0	0	0	0	15	55
	Crafts	12	86	24	144	3	33	91	286
	Creative writing	2	8	0	0	0	0	26	130
Cultural Participation Activities	Other	0	0	1	7	54	280	7	85
	Cultural Camps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Medicine Gathering	0	0	2	5	0	0	4	11
	Singing/Drumming	14	94	0	0	0	0	15	55
	Community Event	2	17	0	0	61	420	0	0
	Talking Circle	0	0	41	341	110	1002	18	93
	Feasts	0	0	5	89	8	80	0	0
	Sweats	9	32	23	300	59	1046	99	1208
	Pipe Ceremony	0	0	0	0	29	245	117	460
	Turtle Ceremony	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Individual Mentoring Topics	Full Moon Ceremony	0	0	0	0	1	22	0	0
	Other	0	0	3	92	4	53	27	52
	Abuse	0	0	2	2	1	1	4	4
	Spiritual Guidance	4	17	86	86	1460	1544	93	93
	Cultural Knowledge	16	106	82	82	1452	1549	78	81
	Health	1	1	6	6	4	4	15	15
	Death/Loss/Grief	1	1	24	24	25	25	52	55
	Gangs	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
	Personal Crisis	2	2	33	33	24	24	27	27
	Relationships	0	0	4	4	5	5	13	13
Community Supports	Case Management	0	0	10	10	3	3	0	0
	Residential Schooling	0	0	18	18	36	36	11	12
	Communications	0	0	20	20	3	3	1	1
	Behavior	0	0	4	4	2	2	7	7
	Goal-Setting	2	2	31	31	25	25	3	3
	Stress Management	1	1	41	41	3	3	7	7
	Decision-Making	3	5	6	6	3	3	10	10
	Parent/Family Issues	0	0	11	11	25	25	15	15
	Substance Abuse	2	2	11	11	2	2	4	4
	Community Supports	0	0	2	2	15	15	3	3
Self-Esteem	Self-Esteem	0	0	1	1	6	6	5	5
	Personal Awareness	4	4	24	24	17	17	35	35
Other	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

* Institutional abbreviations: PAYR = Prince Albert Youth Residence [Male Youth]; PGCC = Pine Grove Correctional Centre [Female Adult]; PACC = Prince Albert Correctional Centre [Male Adult]; SCC = Saskatoon Correctional Centre [Male Adult].

Another result shown in Table 5 is that there tends to be a lot of activity in group learning within the two adult male facilities; at least compared to the female and young offender facilities represented herein. This may potentially be explained by the fact that the adult male institutions have ongoing regularly scheduled Aboriginal programming throughout the year. Another explanation is that young offenders have less opportunity for group learning because they are in school during the day.

With respect to program data kept at the participant level, the scope of this review does not allow for specific case comparisons of offender experiences in FNMP. Basic visual inspections of this spreadsheet do suggest great variation in the number of times that offenders receive individual mentoring. Some examples include totals of 2, 3, 5, 10, 25, 30, and over 50.

In lieu of this, some observations were made available by looking at the overall number of individual offenders who participated in group learning, cultural participation and individual mentoring, respectfully. Table 6 reveals that generally, the highest proportion of offenders access cultural participation activities, followed by individual mentoring and then group learning.

Table 6: Number of Sentences/Remands Involving Program Activities By Type*

Activity	PAYR (<i>n</i> = xx)	PGCC (<i>n</i> = 369)	PACC (<i>n</i> = 905)	SCC (<i>n</i> = 638)
Group Learning	28 (57.1%)	17 (4.6%)	292 (32.3%)	152 (23.8%)
Cultural Participation	26 (53.1%)	283 (76.7%)	667 (73.7%)	533 (83.5%)
Individual Mentoring	7 (14.2%)	139 (37.7%)	537 (59.3%)	131 (20.5%)

* The total *N* of each institution accounts for total stays (sentence/remand) in an institution rather than total number of offenders.

When it comes to gathering data on request slips received and responded to, the three adult institutions collected data from April 2012 until January 2013. Since young offenders do not currently use the request slip system to gain access to cultural support, no data are available for Prince Albert Youth Residence. As Table 7 shows, there is some variation in the extent to which cultural staff have been able to respond to offender request slips.

Table 7: Number of Request Slips Received and Responded to by Institution

Institution	Requests Received	Requests Responded To	Response Ratio	Individual Offenders Submitting Requests
PGCC	230	208	90.4%	47
PACC	643	374	58.2%	180
SCC	639	434	67.9%	101

It is important that readers understand that multiple factors influence an institution's response ratio. Some possibilities include offender demand for cultural support, access to adequate facilities, program time restraints, advisor scheduling, staff availability and other programming that takes up offender time. Considering this, there may be a number of different reasons for why Pine Grove's response ratio is higher than that of the two male institutions.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this review have allowed the research team to arrive at a number of detailed findings. Many of these findings help answer the questions that guided this review process. Other findings may not have been predicted during the planning process of this review, but they may be quite useful to FNMP staff as future deliveries of this program unfold.

In general, this review has identified that FNMP provides access to cultural activities, knowledge and individual support that helps inmates identify the roots of their problems and acquire some tools to help them through upcoming challenges in life. Services of the program are designed to offer support in areas where offenders do not have a lot of strength—namely in self-esteem, decision-making and commitment to a traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. Cultural advisors and coordinators work in partnership to provide hope and inspiration to inmates that helps motivate them to lead a better life. Lastly, program staff make an effort to work with local Aboriginal communities to identify supports for inmates upon release.

The first specific finding of this review process was that all of the various cultural and spiritual services offered to offenders can be grouped into at least three different categories. These include services that provide group learning opportunities, participation in cultural activities and one-on-one support or guidance through individual mentoring with cultural program staff. In a working group with the program's cultural coordinators, the kinds of activities and supports various institutions were providing became clear. This helped in the development of a program monitoring database, and ultimately, an ongoing understanding of the services delivered by cultural programs in each institution.

With respect to how program staff determine the types of cultural services to offer, offender need and interest—mediated by institutional capacity and staff experience—have the greatest impact on the design of cultural services within institutions. The needs of offenders are identified through observations of offenders, consultations with cultural advisors (including Elders), inquiries with other institutional staff, and interactions with offenders themselves. As often as possible, program staff shape the design of services to meet the needs of offenders. However, institutional restraints related to budgeting, facility availability, time constrictions and security matters may stand in the way.

The third set of findings help provide an understanding of who exactly provides cultural services within the FNMP. Dialogue from interview respondents suggest that cultural advisors come to institutions with a variety of life experiences. Some have followed traditional ways their entire life, whereas others first had to take some time to overcome personal challenges in their journey to where they are today. Despite these differences, all advisors share a common dedication to Aboriginal culture and tradition in their personal life. Advisors are commonly recruited through public job postings and from within the community. They are selected based upon the extent to which their own personal journey and teachings can (a) contribute towards the cultural team environment; and (b) help inmates see and experience the importance of culture, spirituality, connectedness and support in their own healing journey.

With respect to cultural coordinators, they too have diverse backgrounds. Most, however, have a corrections background and came to the position of cultural coordinator because of their personal interest in helping Aboriginal culture play a more significant role in the healing process of offenders. Others have professional experience in the human service sector and have come to FNMP with an appreciation for meeting all needs of offenders—including those that are spiritual and ethnic-based. Critical to the role of coordinators is that they share an understanding and appreciation for the importance of culture and tradition in the healing and rehabilitative process.

Another question driving this review process was how the needs of offenders were being met. Once program staff identify the needs of offenders, and shape programming options around these needs, they use a variety of tactics to engage offenders in these services: announcements, sign-up sheets, referrals through correctional staff, or individual recruitment. Participation in cultural programming is voluntary. The major barriers to offenders participating in cultural programming is their risk level and other ongoing commitments within the institution.

During the provision of support for offenders, cultural advisors and coordinators strive to meet the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional needs of offenders. According to program staff, positive feedback from offenders suggest there is considerable satisfaction with cultural programming among offenders. Furthermore, it is reported by interview respondents that offenders engaged in cultural programming are less likely to be hostile, and show more respect and controlled behaviour within the institution. During delivery of services, program staff try to form strong positive relationships with offenders. This often helps offenders open up, and allows for program staff to better identify and meet the support needs of offenders.

One of the major topics of discussion during both the focus groups with advisors and interviews with all program staff was the challenges they face in delivering cultural programs within the institutions. The issues mentioned most frequently by multiple participants of this review process covered a wide variety of topics:

- Time restraints, institutional security protocols, a lack of sufficient program space and infrastructure undermine the extent to which cultural programs can be fully implemented.
- The low level of security clearance for advisors limits their mobility throughout the institution and makes meeting with offenders or preparing for activities difficult.
- The delay in remuneration of cultural advisors is burdensome. It makes it difficult to retain advisors and causes hardship to those who choose to earn their living on providing Elder services.
- The poor reputation of the justice system within Aboriginal communities, combined with the disinterest in supporting offenders who have hurt Aboriginal communities,

makes it difficult to establish good relationships that are needed during the offender reintegration process.

- Overall, there is a general lack of cultural supports in communities that inmates can be linked with upon release. Much of this has to do with geographic challenges as well as a general decline in the number of Aboriginal people who are able to help others live a traditional way of life.
- There are difficulties in finding qualified advisors with sufficient personal knowledge and experience to guide offenders through their own healing process. Some of this has to do with geographic barriers, an unwillingness of traditional Elders to bring spirituality into penal institutions, and competition from other Elder service opportunities that offer better working conditions and both more adequate and timely compensation.
- Modern Western ways of hiring advisors through a paper application and resume process is not an effective way of finding individuals who live a traditional lifestyle. Keeping a paper record of one's own journey in life is not a custom in First Nations culture. Doing so undermines humility. Elders need to be sought, they do not look for people to give advice to.
- Remuneration of advisors without sufficient compensation for fuel is a major barrier for getting on-reserve Elders to come into the cities and provide spiritual support and guidance.
- Having to provide each ceremony or event multiple times because some inmate groups cannot be mixed (e.g. gangs, conflict, etc.), strains time, resources and the meaningfulness of cultural activities.
- High-risk groups of inmates are often the most in-need of the benefits that come with cultural involvement and support. However they are not allowed to become involved because of their risk-level and general behaviour. This is a barrier to FNMP's vision for helping all offenders achieve a holistic balance in their life.

Another intent of this review was to gather information on the various successes of FNMP within provincial institutions. Although the only source of data for this topic was interviews with program staff, sufficient consistency in responses from various institutions brings strength to this report's findings on program success.

According to the results of this review, the program has been successful in engaging otherwise non-involved individuals in cultural events and support networks that help them develop and maintain a healthy, positive way of life. This has been demonstrated by offender participation in individual mentoring, cultural activities, group learning opportunities and in helping offenders find cultural supports in their home communities upon release.

The program has also been successful in providing individual support to offenders who show personal growth while they continue to solicit advice and guidance from program staff. Dialogue from advisors and coordinators reveal that a high number of offenders are actively involved in cultural programming, and self-report on the benefits of their personal experiences. According to respondents, cultural programming has had a calming effect on inmates, it helps them focus on the positive aspects of their life and forget about the fact that they are incarcerated for a moment.

A third finding on success concerns the relationship between correctional staff and cultural program staff. With a few exceptions, there is generally broad support for cultural programs from correctional staff. This may very well be fostered by the Aboriginal awareness training provided by cultural coordinators, or as one respondent pointed out, “the fact that cultural programs are having a positive impact on inmates and their behaviour while they’re in here”.

Of all the information that cultural advisors and coordinators provided to the research team, their dialogue on ways to improve FNMP appeared to be the most plentiful. Results of this review have identified a number of suggestions for improvement. Many of these have influenced the design of recommendations proposed in the concluding section of this report.

- A reduction in barriers related to the institutional security protocol, availability of advisors, and lack of adequate cultural facilities will provide additional opportunities for offenders to participate in all aspects of cultural programming.
- Contracting additional advisors, with more hours, and more flexible hours, will help increase overall program productivity—particularly as it relates to request response rates (for individual mentoring).
- Remuneration for advisors that is equivalent to other cultural or spiritual support providers within institutions will provide a sense of fairness and respect to cultural advisors.
- Efforts should be made to increase advisor access to inmates and reduce the interruption of cultural services—such as individual mentoring or ceremony. Regularly scheduled non-cultural programming, shift changes and inmate counts all impede the completeness of certain cultural services.
- Holding cultural ceremonies requires certain resources. More adequate funding would improve the quality, frequency and access to ceremony participation for offenders.
- The disparity in appropriate facility spaces across the institutions results in unequal access to cultural programming for offenders. Ensuring that each cultural program has access to at least 2 private mentoring rooms and an exclusive group activity room would help improve the ability of program staff to offer effective programming.

- A higher priority placement of cultural programming within overall corrections programming—particularly where scheduling conflicts—would help elevate the importance of FNMP within institutions. Too often, cultural programming is pushed to the end of the priority list when it comes to ways in which offenders spend their days at the institution.
- Cultural coordinators should work more systematically to develop stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities where offenders come from. This will help in the reintegration process.
- Special training for advisors that complements their traditional knowledge and experiences should be made available so they are better able to respond to difficult situations.
- While the needs and interests of offenders are always considered, better measurement of their perspectives on cultural programming may be of benefit. Therefore, participant evaluations of cultural programs should be incorporated after various activities (particularly, group learning opportunities).
- FNMP management should work with program staff to identify and implement a means to retain cultural advisors for longer periods of time. Re-examining contract periods, work conditions, remuneration rates, scheduling and gathering feedback from advisors may help in this process.
- There needs to be a greater role of cultural coordinators and advisors in release planning. While in the correctional centre, many offenders benefit from the ongoing spiritual support and traditional guidance offered by cultural program staff. However without access to this help in the community, the transition period of an offender's release may be difficult. As such, cultural staff should be involved in all stages of release planning to make sure that offenders have access to appropriate cultural support in the community.

Perhaps the most important finding of this review is that FNMP has the potential to develop a common service framework. The results of this review suggest that while there is variation in cultural programs being provided within the province's correctional institutions, there is an opportunity for a common service framework to be developed. In particular, it is possible to design a framework in a way that avoids the sacrifice of program quality and effectiveness. The evidence to support this primary finding is woven throughout most of the results generated in this review process.

To begin, although the cultural advisors and coordinators have each travelled their own unique journey, and even though they may bring different learning opportunities to offenders, they all

contribute towards offender engagement in cultural and spiritual activities that bring a holistic balance to the lives of offenders. Nowhere during the interview process was it apparent that there were conflicting views of the program's purpose among respondents. As such, moving forward with the same objectives should help bring cultural staff together under a common framework of service delivery.

Another supporting factor for the potential of developing a common service framework is that many of the services provided to offenders within both the adult and young offender systems, are driven by client need and interest. Results of the interview process revealed that most coordinators design programs around the direct needs of offenders—as they are detected by correctional staff, cultural advisors and offenders themselves. As such, where there is a common emergence of offender needs, there is greater potential for similar programming to meet those needs.

One caveat raised during discussions with cultural coordinators, however, was that there are ethnic and geographic differences in Aboriginal populations among the institutions. If programs are to be designed around the direct needs of offenders, this may make it difficult to deliver similar programming. Mediating this concern, however, is the fact that individual activities do not need to be prescribed by such a common framework. Rather, the province's institutions can focus on broader program parameters or categories that all lead to the same end.

In terms of developing this framework, interview respondents identified three options to help in the building process:

- More frequent communication among cultural coordinators and advisors that allows for sharing and discussion on program activities and services;
- A collaborative effort between cultural program staff and institutional managers to foster more common goals and developments in cultural programming;
- A common reporting mechanism that encourages similarities in service delivery.

7.0 LIMITATIONS

Although the research team worked hard to try and implement a strong methodology for this review, there are a number of limitations inherent to the methods chosen. While these limitations do not serve as a critical setback to the results of this review, they are worth considering when trying to generalize findings of this report elsewhere.

The first limitation is that the qualitative portion of the methodology only involves interviews with cultural advisors and coordinators. By excluding other stakeholders—such as institution officials, correctional workers and offenders themselves—this review only presents one perspective of cultural programming. However, the methodology employed herein meets the needs of the Ministry simply because the purpose of this review was to gather an internal view of FNMP across various institutions. Once collected, this information will eventually help cultural staff move towards the development of a common service framework. Had the purpose of this review been to measure outcomes of FNMP, interviews with other stakeholders would have been paramount.

A second limitation of this review is that the scope of this process is restricted to an internal view of cultural programs as opposed to FNMP being part of the larger correctional system. Although a number of results generated through this review provide a limited understanding of how FNMP contribute to corrections, this review does not provide a perspective of FNMP as it relates to other components of the correctional system. Consequently, this review reports on what is important to cultural programming, and not so much on what about cultural programming is important to correctional facilities.

The third limitation of this review concerns the quantitative portion of the methodology. Due to staff data collection capacity, as well as limitations in the available software, the cultural database is only two-dimensional. As such, when it comes to gathering program level data, the database fails to prevent offenders from being counted more than once in the service columns. At the participant data level, while coordinators are able to keep information on the total number of services that offenders receive, there is no way to determine individual dates of these services—other than it occurred between the offender's start and end date in the cultural program. Considering these limitations, when analysts of cultural data plan on reporting their results, it is important that they highlight the fact that the program level data provides information across time but not on individuals, and the participant level data provides information on individuals, but with no opportunity to capture specific time periods.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The review process described in this report has produced two main observations. The first is that although there is variation in cultural programming across Saskatchewan's provincial correctional institutions, certain steps can be taken to move the programs towards a common service delivery framework without sacrificing quality and effectiveness. The second is that First Nations and Métis Programs depend heavily on adequate facility space, sufficient resources, committed and available cultural advisors, access to offenders and cooperation with correctional staff. As such, ensuring these factors are equally present across all institutions will help improve cultural programming across Saskatchewan.

The process by which the research team arrived at the findings of this review was influenced by the interests of FNMP staff, the ability of program staff to gather and store program monitoring data and the desire of the research team to answer the main questions driving this review. Although some methodological limitations minimize the extent to which FNMP could have been explored, the main purposes of this descriptive review has arguably been fulfilled. That is, the report on activities of FNMP within Saskatchewan's correctional system have been described and reported.

In executing the methodology of this review, the research team was able to gather and present results which will hopefully assist Ministry decision-makers and cultural program staff work with correctional managers and program planners to advance and improve the role of Aboriginal culture in the personal healing journeys of offenders. Should the recommendations of this report be implemented, future reviews of First Nations and Métis Programs could generate favourable results on the extent to which cultural program staff are making progress towards their mission: *to contribute towards safer communities by decreasing reoffending, through offering offenders guidance and by engaging them with First Nations and Métis knowledge and tradition.*

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide additional opportunities for offenders to participate in all aspects of cultural programming.
2. Hire more advisors with more hours and more flexible hours to better meet offender needs.
3. Provide remuneration for advisors that is equivalent to other cultural or spiritual support providers within provincial institutions.
4. Establish a commitment between programming staff, institutional managers and cultural program staff to reduce some of the internal barriers to cultural programming, (e.g., limited access to inmates; interruption of individual or group services; scheduling conflicts with other programming).
5. Provide opportunities for institutional managers and team leaders to become more aware of the various components of FNMP and the benefits of this service to Aboriginal offenders.
6. Provide sufficient spending resources for supplies and services required of cultural ceremonies.
7. Increase access to adequate facility space to offer cultural programming.
8. Achieve a higher priority placement of FNMP within overall corrections programming—particularly where scheduling conflicts occur.
9. Build stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities; and organize institutional knowledge of these relationships to support the offender reintegration process.
10. Provide special training for advisors that complements their traditional knowledge and experiences so they are better able to respond to difficult situations in a correctional setting.
11. Provide more advanced cultural training and traditional teachings to coordinators themselves, so that they can better understand the diverse cultural needs of all Aboriginal offenders.
12. Develop and implement evaluation forms for program staff to complete following the delivery of cultural programming.
13. Develop and implement a means for offenders to provide feedback on their participation in cultural programming.

14. Provide more opportunities for cultural coordinators and advisors from different institutions to collaborate on program planning and options of service delivery.
15. Identify and implement a means to retain cultural advisors for longer periods of time.
16. Secure and maintain a greater role of cultural coordinators and/or advisors in reintegration planning.
17. Where incidents within the institution occur, encourage open communication between correctional staff and cultural advisors concerning the involvement of offenders that may have led them to needing individual mentoring support.
18. Facilitate better communication between advisors and correctional staff concerning the general emotional state of offenders—particularly when they are referred to cultural staff because of their current emotional concerns.
19. Develop and implement a request slip process that allows all institutions to gather consistent information on the number of request slips (or referrals) received and the number of request slips (or referrals) responded to.
20. Continue to implement the program monitoring system developed through this review process.
21. Nurture the natural progression of cultural programming towards a common service framework by helping all provincial institutions have access to the same quality of cultural facilities, adequate resources for activities and sufficient personnel capacity.
22. Provide corrections awareness training to cultural advisors so that they have proper knowledge of the various dynamics, rules and norms of the correctional system.

APPENDICES

QUESTIONS FOR ADVISORS

Cultural Services

- 1) Can you please tell me about yourself (ie: skills, experiences, qualities that helped you become an advisor).
- 2) Please describe your understanding of the role that cultural advisors play in Saskatchewan's correctional system.
- 3) Within your institution, what services do you deliver to offenders? (explain topics, types, goals, purpose)
- 4) How do you determine which services to provide to offenders?
- 5) What do you feel offenders achieve or receive from their involvement in cultural programming?
- 6) What barriers or challenges do you experience in delivering services to offenders?
- 7) How do you feel other institutional staff treat yourself and the other cultural program staff?
- 8) What about the cultural programming services offered at your institution do you feel offenders like? What do they dislike?

Administration

- 9) What methods of finding cultural advisors have been used in your institution? How were you selected and hired?
- 10) Please explain the relationship between the advisors and coordinator in your institution.
- 11) What training—whether it be about corrections work or cultural programming—have you received through this experience to help in your role as cultural advisor?

Looking Forward

- 12) In an effort to try and improve services, and reduce variation that occurs between the cultural programming offered in Saskatchewan's correctional institutions—both young offender and adult—what suggestions do you have towards building a common program or service framework for First Nations and Métis Programs?
- 13) What improvements can be made to increase the quality of service offered through First Nations and Métis Programs?
- 14) Do you have any additional comments or feedback that we did not cover?

QUESTIONS FOR COORDINATORS

Cultural Services

- 1) Please describe your understanding of the role that cultural coordinators play in Saskatchewan's correctional system.
- 2) Within your institution, what services do you deliver to offenders? (explain topics, types, goals, purpose)
- 3) How do you identify the needs/interests of offenders in regards to cultural programming?
- 4) Considering these needs/interests, how do you go about determining the types of programming activities to deliver?
- 5) How do you go about developing new programs for offenders?
- 6) How do you address the diverse cultural needs of offenders in your institution?
- 7) What barriers or challenges do you experience in delivering services to offenders?

Release Planning

- 8) What role have you played in the release of offenders to their home community?
- 9) What challenges have you experienced in this process?
- 10) What are some successful strategies for helping an offender find cultural supports upon their release?
- 11) How would you describe the working relationship between the cultural coordinator and case worker/planner in your institution?
- 12) How often do you communicate with the institutional case worker/planner regarding planning for an offender's release?

Offenders

- 13) How are offenders recruited to participate in cultural programming at your institution?
- 14) Are there guidelines which suggest how offenders can become and/or remain involved in cultural programming?
- 15) What factors affect offender participation, involvement and/or retention in cultural programming?

16) What about the cultural programming services offered at your institution do you feel offenders like? What do they dislike?

Administration

17) What methods of recruiting cultural advisors have been used in your institution?

18) What has helped/hampered this process?

19) What training—whether it be about corrections work or cultural programming—have you received to help in your role as cultural coordinator?

20) What training do advisors receive to prepare them for work in a correctional institution?

21) To date, what has guided the day to day activities of you and the advisors?

22) How have you conducted outreach to the community, with respect to the goals and purpose of cultural programming?

23) How do you feel other institutional staff treat yourself and the other cultural program staff?

24) What support do you receive from other corrections staff?

25) What challenges or barriers do you face within your institution?

26) What challenges or barriers do you face outside of the institution?

Looking Forward

27) In an effort to try and improve services, and reduce variation that occurs between the cultural programming offered in Saskatchewan's correctional institutions—both young offender and adult—what suggestions do you have towards building a common program or service framework for First Nations and Métis Programs?

28) What improvements can be made to increase the quality of service offered through First Nations and Métis Programs?

29) Do you have any additional comments or feedback that we did not cover?

First Nations and Métis Programs
Adult and Youth Corrections
PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY SHEET

CATEGORY	TYPE	Event Type	# Participants	PARTICIPANT NAMES	PRISONER ID #
Group Learning	Traditional parenting				
	Traditional life skills				
	Aboriginal studies				
	Language				
	Tipi teachings				
	Story telling				
	Medicine wheel				
	Hide preparation				
	Crafts				
	Creative writing				
Cultural Participation	Other				
	Cultural camps				
	Medicine gathering				
	Singing/drumming				
	Community event				
	Talking circle				
	Feasts				
	Sweats				
	Pipe ceremony				
	Turtle ceremony				
	Full moon ceremony				
	Other				

Advisor/Coordinator Name: _____ Institution: _____ Date: _____

First Nations and Métis Programs – Adult and Youth Corrections
INDIVIDUAL MENTORING SHEET



Mentoring Code				
1 – abuse	5 – death/loss/grief	9 – case management	13 – goal-setting	17 – substance abuse
2 – spiritual guidance	6 – gangs	10 – residential school	14 – stress management	18 – community supports
3 – cultural teaching	7 – personal crisis	11 – communication help	15 – decision-making	19 – self-esteem
4 – health	8 – relationships	12 – behaviour	16 – parent/family issues	20 – personal awareness

Month: _____ **Week:** _____ **Institution:** _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Name:							
ID#:							
Advisor:							
Code:							
Name:							
ID#:							
Advisor:							
Code:							
Name:							
ID#:							
Advisor:							
Code:							
Name:							
ID#:							
Advisor:							
Code:							

First Nations and Métis Programs
Adult and Youth Corrections
Weekly Total Sheet (Same Month Only)

Category	Type	WEEK:							# of participants
		Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		# events	participants	# events	participants	# events	participants	# events	Event COUNT
Group Learning	Traditional parenting								
	Traditional life skills								
	Aboriginal studies								
	Language								
	Tipi teachings								
	Story telling								
	Medicine wheel								
	Hide preparation								
	Crafts								
	Creative Writing								
Cultural Participation	Other								
	Cultural camps								
	Medicine gathering								
	Singing/Drumming								
	Community event								
	Talking circle								
	Feasts								
	Sweats								
	Pipe ceremony								
	Turtle ceremony								
	Full moon ceremony								
	Other								
Individual Mentoring	Abuse								
	Spiritual guidance								
	Cultural teachings								
	Health								
	Death/Loss/Grief								
	Gangs								
	Personal Crisis								
	Relationships								
	Case Management								
	Residential School								
	Communication Help								
	Behaviour								
	Goal-setting								
	Stress management								
	Decision-making								
	Parent/family issues								
	Substance abuse								
	Community support								
	Self-esteem								
	Personal awareness								
	Other								

Advisor/Coordinator Name: _____ Institution: _____