IN BRIEF: INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA'S "LIVING CONDITIONS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES" PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

Launched in the fall of 2007, this project brought thirteen Aboriginal photographers to various First Nations and Inuit communities located across Canada. The goal was to take images that help to represent the living conditions of Aboriginal Communities based on the indicators used in Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Community Well-Being Index (CWB):

- Educational attainment;
- Income / Economies – traditional and non-traditional;
- Labour force participation (people at work); and,
- Housing and community infrastructure.

The photographs collected through this project are visual documents that challenge viewers' perceptions of actual living conditions in Aboriginal and Inuit communities. Tying images of actual living conditions in these communities to the research results of the Community Well-being Index makes for a powerful message: Canada faces significant challenges in raising the levels of well-being in First Nation and Inuit communities relative to other Canadian communities.

Participating communities include:

- Beaver Creek, YK
- Behchoko, NT
- Berens River, MB
- Bloodvein, MB
- Brokenhead, MB
- Buffalo Point, MB
- Haines Junction, YK
- Hay River, NT
- Inuvik, NT
- Kuujjuaq, QC
- Ministikwan, SK
- OceanMan, SK
- Osoyoos, BC
- Sanikiluaq, NU
- Shesheep, AB
- Tsawwassen, BC
- Tsinstikeptum, BC
- Tsussie, BC
- Yellow Quill, SK
- Wendake, QC

We worked hard to ensure there is a balanced approach to this project that neither glosses over reality nor only celebrates success. Therefore, we included communities that fall at all levels of the CWB: communities that are doing better than the average Canadian community, those that are below the average Canadian community and those that have shown improvement over time.

A small selection of the photos obtained through this project were on display over the summer of 2009 at the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Art Gallery and a larger selection of the photos will be published in the form of a coffee table book for release in the fall of 2010 through the University of Manitoba Press. A selection of the photos is available for viewing on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's website, at http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/ac/aga/cata-eng.asp.

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