



## Exploring the Relationship Between Substance Use and Economic Development in Atlantic First Nation Communities



### What is the research about?

The purpose of the research is to provide baseline evidence regarding substance use, and to highlight the relationships between substance use and economic development in First Nations communities across Atlantic Canada.

### What does the research do?

The research finds that economic development and substance use are dynamically intertwined and linked. It highlights the different ways in which substance use can limit economic activity, whether that is through absenteeism and poor performance on the job or because substance use comes into play in several systems closely related to a community's economy; for example, achievement at school, prospects of making the transition from social assistance to work, or in being successful in and graduating from training programs. Strategies are provided to address issues of substance use not only on its own terms by focusing on clients and treatment options, but also as part of larger community efforts to strengthen the economic base.

**Timeline:** November 2013-March 2016

### Why is the research important?

According to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), First Nations are challenged in the process of accessing supports and services to address substance use issues in their communities. They consistently encounter more obstacles to access than the broader Canadian population. Beyond direct costs stemming from substance use and the inability to access supports and services, there are indirect economic and social costs to communities. To date, there has been little research conducted to explore the connections between substance use and economic development in Atlantic First Nations communities. This project provides information required to better understand the relationships between substance use and economic development in Atlantic First Nations communities and makes recommendations on positive approaches to address these issues.

### Research team:

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