



# Entrepreneurship Among First Nations Women in the Atlantic Region



Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research (AAEDIRP)

## What is the research about?

The research fills a void by establishing baseline data on the prevalence of Aboriginal women engaging in entrepreneurship, their level of interest in engaging in the entrepreneurial process, and the factors enabling and constraining engagement. The knowledge gained from this research strengthens community economic development efforts that encourage and support entrepreneurship among Aboriginal women.

## What does the research do?

This research addresses the need to better understand the prevalence, nature and scope of entrepreneurship among Aboriginal women in the Atlantic Region; and builds capacity among Aboriginal women to conduct and leverage research as a tool in community-based efforts to improve economic and community well-being. Findings show there is a thriving cohort of female Aboriginal entrepreneurs and, despite all odds, these entrepreneurs have established successful businesses that are making valuable contributions to employment in their communities. The research findings provide an initial foundation for effectively developing policies and programs to encourage and support entrepreneurship among Aboriginal women.

## Advisory Committee:

**Chief Candice Paul** (St. Mary's First Nation); **Eileen Paul** (Manager, Membertou Entrepreneur Center); **Odelle Pike** (President, Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network); **Tracy Menge** (Economic Development Officer, Eskasoni First Nation); **Rosie Basque** (Entrepreneur, Rosie's Hair Shop; Eskasoni First Nation).

## Why is the research important?

A major policy objective in Canada is to build a more entrepreneurial economy. Key to achieving this is the strengthening of Aboriginal entrepreneurship. There have been advances made in the knowledge base concerning the scope and nature of Aboriginal entrepreneurship, including its contribution to job creation on a national level. This knowledge does not yet include the growing number of women who are increasingly choosing business ownership as a career path. In fact research into women and entrepreneurship overall is sparse and underdeveloped, with research specifically focused on Aboriginal women rare at best. The research provides a fuller understanding of how women in Aboriginal communities – both entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs – view the issues, opportunities and challenges in becoming and being an entrepreneur.

## Research Team:

**Monica Diochon** (Department of Business Administration, St. Francis Xavier University); **Alison Mathie** (Coady International Institute); **Sheila Isaac** (Coady International Institute); **Eileen Alma** (Coady International Institute); **Blossom LaBillois** (Eel River Bar First Nation); **Katerie Stevens** (Eskasoni First Nation); **Shawnee LaPorte** (Membertou First Nation).

**Timeline:** March 2013–December 2013

