TECHNICAL EMPLOYMENT WITH HYDRO-QUÉBEC (TEHQ) PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT
2025

Technical Employment at Hydro-Québec Final Report
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A Niskamoon Report for the Technical Employment at Hydro-Québec program
as per the Apitisiiwiin / Cree Employment Agreement
2018–2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) Program Final Report offers a comprehensive retrospective of an initiative designed to train and provide employment opportunities to Cree beneficiaries in technical roles within Hydro-Québec. Developed under the 2002 Cree Employment Agreement (Eeyou Apatisiiwin Niskamoon), the program sought to address employment disparities and fulfill long-standing commitments rooted in agreements such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975) and the La Grande Agreement (1986).

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The report documents the evolution, management, and outcomes of the TEHQ program from 2002 to 2017. Through partnerships with Hydro-Québec, the Cree School Board, and a variety of training institutions, the Apatisiiwin Corporation (which later became the Niskamoon Corporation) managed the program and supported Cree students through training in four technical roles: Apparatus Electricians, Apparatus Mechanics, Automation Electricians, and Telecommunications Technicians.

This report was written with the goal of capturing the experiences and perspectives of those who were involved in the TEHQ program, to bring their knowledge forward for the benefit of future generations. Specifically, it aims to:

- Explore the program's history, accomplishments, and lessons learned to build on its insights and avoid duplicating past efforts.
- Compile financial information to provide an overview of how budgets evolved over time as a function of both increasing enrolment and assessed needs.
- Develop practical recommendations for managers of similar future professional training programs.

The report includes qualitative and quantitative data from an array of primary sources, including interviews, program reports, and financial data, with a focus on long-term impacts.

KEY FINDINGS

The TEHQ program is widely considered to have been a success, based on three significant performance indicators: employment outcomes, graduation rates, and long-term capacity building.

- **Employment Outcomes:** A total of 122 Cree graduates were hired by Hydro-Québec, with 101 securing permanent roles. Cree employees made up nearly 25% of the Hydro-Québec workforce in the targeted job categories in the Eeyou Istchee territory. Cree women held 62% of all permanent positions in the same territory—well above proportional representation.

- **Graduation Success:** The program achieved a 63% overall graduation rate, and 66% for vocational programs—more than double the average for Cree students enroled in post-secondary studies outside the communities. Strong support services helped participants overcome language, academic, and personal challenges.

- **Capacity Building:** Even those who did not complete the full training gained valuable skills through prerequisites and language programs. The initiative helped build long-term learning, confidence, and employment readiness in Eeyou Istchee.

Beyond meeting its targets, TEHQ set a foundation for future training efforts and community-led development. Its legacy continues to shape education, employment, and partnerships in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of the TEHQ program was matched by valuable lessons that can inform future initiatives.

Future programs modelled after TEHQ should begin with strategic planning. A full year of preparation prior to students arriving is recommended to define partner roles, set objectives, and establish evaluation and communication protocols. A dedicated lead can support collaboration, reduce misunderstandings, and ensure long-term accountability.

Training should be informed by clear labour market analysis. Understanding job availability and student readiness early on helps avoid discrepancies between program design and employment outcomes. Programs should consider both job requirements and the realities of student preparedness, particularly in academic prerequisites and language skills.

Efforts should be made to design culturally relevant and community-responsive programs. This includes reviewing assessments for bias, involving families in key stages, and developing targeted strategies to increase the participation of Cree women. When training must take place outside the territory, holistic support such as childcare, psychosocial services, and housing is essential to student retention. Support services must be flexible and continually assessed for effectiveness.

Finally, professional Indigenous training programs such as TEHQ should be framed within a broader reconciliation strategy. Indigenous employment cannot be a stand-alone initiative; it must be linked to long-term commitments to cultural safety, community development, and systemic change.

CONCLUSION

The TEHQ program's impact extends far beyond its graduates. It stands as a model of collaborative, capacity-driven reconciliation. This final report captures the full scope of what was achieved, and what is possible. It serves both as a historical record and a roadmap for future Cree training programs grounded in mutual respect, shared prosperity, and community-driven success.

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ᐅ ᒫᒥᕐ ᐸᐍᕆᒧᕋ"ᐃᑲᐢ ᐊᓯᑌ ᐊᓯᕈ ᒍᐅᑉ ᐅᕐᒎᑎᕝᒻᒍᒃ ᐅ ᐊᑐᕈ·ᐊᑕᕲ ᐅ"ᒥ<ᕑ ᐁᐅᑦ ᐅᕑ ᐯᕈ"ᑲ"ᑲᔾ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑕᐃᐊ" ᒋᕐ ᐃ"ᑕᑯ"ᑲᕿ ᒋᕐ ᓇᑕ"ᑲᕿ ᐊᓯᕐ ᐃᓪᕆᐳᕿ ᕲᑖᒍᐃᐄᕲᓂ ᐊᒃᕇ ᒐ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑯ ᑎᑲᕑ ᐅᕐᒃᑯᓇᒍᕝ ᒍᕝ ᑎᒃᑎᒻᒍᒃ ᑳ ᐊᔈᑲᕑᕈᕿ ᑫᕿ ᐅᔫᕑᐳ"ᐁᑊᒻ ᑳᑯᒻᒍ ᒋᕲᕒ ᐁ ᐱᕑ"ᑲᕿ ᕆᓀ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᓯᕲ ᐊᕿ ᐊᕲᕿ ᐃᓯᑯᕑ ᕐᒍ"ᓂ ᕙᕿ ᕲᑯᕝ ᒋᕐ ᐃᒡᐯᕳᑕᕲᑯ 2002 ᕲ ᐃᕐᑲᐳᕝ ᐊᕐᕲᐳᕑᕲᑐ ᐊᓯᑌ ᐅᕐᒎ ᐃᔈᕑ ᐊᐊᕐᒥᐃᐊ ᓇᑊᒍᕐ ᕲ ᐃᕆᓇ"ᑲᒎᕲ ᑊᐊᕣ, ᐅᒍ ᕲ ᐅᕐᒎ ᐱᓰᐊᕐᑎᕲᒻ ᕲᐃᕐᒃᒍᐃᐊ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᒋᐊ ᕲᕑ ᒫᒃ ᕲ ᐱᓰᐊ"ᑲᕿᕳ ᐅᐣᕑ ᐃᓄᒧᑫᕑᐳ"ᒐᑖ ᑕᓇ ᕲᕑ ᒣᕴᕿᓯᔫ" ᐊᕐᒎᕿᐊ ᑊᒋ ᕿᕑ ᔪᕝ ᕲᒃᕝ ᕲ ᐃᕇᐘᕦ ᕿᒃᒍᕿᕰᓂᕐ ᕲᐅᕑ ᕒᑊ ᐊᕝ ᓇᒪᕑ ᕙᐃ ᑊᒋ ᕵᕲᕥ"ᐳᕥ ᒍᕝ ᕿᒃᒍᕿᕰ 1975 ᐊᕐᕲᐳᕑᕲᐊᕳ ᕲ ᒣᕴᕙᕑᕦᕿ ᑊᒋᒡ ᐊᕝ ᑌᑲᕳᕿ ᕿᒃᒍᕿᕰ 1986 ᕲ ᒣᕴᕙᕳᕦᕿᕑ.

ᐁ ᐃᓯ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕑ ᑊᒋ ᒐ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵ"ᑕᕦᕿᕳ

ᕲᑕ ᕲ ᐸᐍᕆᒧᕋ"ᐃᑲᕦᐈ ᐃ"ᑕᑯᕳ ᑖᕑ ᕲ ᕪᕑ ᐃᕳ<ᕑᓕ ᕲᕤ"ᓕ, ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐱᓰᐊᕐᕑᕦᕿᕑ ᑊᒋ ᑖᕑ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᒣᕴᕐᓕ ᕿᕲᕑ ᕲ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊ ᕲ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕑ 2002 ᐃᕹ 2017 ᐊᕐᕲᐳᕑᕲᐊᕑ. ᕵ ᐃᕪᕳᐸᕥᕴᕲᕶ ᒍᕝ ᕲᕐᒎᑎᕋ"ᒍᒃ ᕲᕤ ᒫᕴ ᐃᔈᕑ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊ ᑊᒋ ᒍᑎ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᕲᑊᕐ", ᕲᕤ ᒫᕴ ᐊᓯᕐ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᐊ ᑊᕐ<ᕿ ᑊᕑ ᐃᕆᓄᒧᑫᕦᕳ ᕲᕲᕤ ᓇᑊᒍᕳ ᑊᕳ<ᕿ ᑊᒋ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕐᕐᕆᓄᒧᕵᕦᕿᕳ, ᕲᕲᕤ ᕲᕐ ᕲ ᕪᒧ"ᑲᕿ ᑊᒋ ᕿᕪᑊᕐᕲ·ᕲᑐ ᕲᕿ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐃᓯᕿ ᑊᒋ ᕵ ·ᕲᕲᐃᕑ"ᕲᕲ ᐊᕿᕶ ᐃᕲ/ᐃᔈᕐ ᕐᒍᑕᒋᐗᕦᐈ ᐊᕿᕶ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᒐᕶ ᕱᐊ" ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᐈ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ ᐊᕲᓯ: ᑊ ᕲᕶᑕᕤ ᑫᕿᒡ ᕲ ᐃᒡᐯᑕᓈᕿᕳ ᕿᑊᕶ ·ᕲᕶᕯᑯᓛᓇᕵᓕ ᕲ ᕲᕑ ᐱᓰᐊᕲᕵᕐ", ᕲᕶᑲᒇᕵᐸᕐᕿᐊ, ᑊ ᕪᕪᑲᕐ"ᕲᑐ ᑖᓇ ᕲᕐ ᐱᓰᐊᕴᐈ ᐊᕿᕶ ᕿᑊᕶ ᕵᕤᕲᓇᕵᕦᕿ ᒋᕐ ᕿᕪᑊᕐᕲ"ᕦᕿ ᑖ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᕲᕶᕑᕲᑐ ᐃᕘᕤ ᐃᕵᐊᕐᕵᕗ, ·ᕲᕶᕯᑯᓛᓇᕵᕐᓕᓕ ᕲ ᕲᕑ ᐱᓰᐊᕳ ᕿᑊᕶ ᕲ ᕪᕪᑲᕐ"ᕲᕳ ᑊᒋ ᕲ ᕲᕶᕲᕤ, ᑊᒋ ᕶᑊ ᐊᓯᑌ ᕲ ᕲᕶᕲᕤ ᒫᕴ ᕲ ᐃ"ᑕᑯᓇᕵ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐱᓰᐊ ᕪᕪᕶ ᕿᑊᕶ ᐊᓯᑌ ᕲ ᕲᕑ ᐊᕦᕥ"ᐃᑐᕪᕿᕑ.

ᕲ ᐸᐍᕆᒧᕋ"ᐃᑲᕦ ᑊ ᕲᕑ"ᕦᕿᕑ ᕲᒍᕳ ᑊ ᐃ ᕲᕑ ᕲ"ᕦᕿᕳ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᕳ<ᕑᕲ ᐊᓯᕐ ᑊ ᕲᕥᑲ"ᑲᔾ ᕲᕷ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊᕑ, ᑊᒋ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᕫᕐᕑᒥ"ᕲᕵᕲᑐ, ᒋᕐ ᕲᕑ ᕿᕪᑊᕐᕲᕲᕶᑐ ᕵᒃ ᐊᕲᕶ ᑖ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᕿᕪᑊᕐᕲ"ᑲᔾ ᕷᕗᕲᕑ ᕲᑌ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕐᑕᕶᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐᕑ. ᕲ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᒥᕦᕿᕑ ᕲᕲᒇ ᕲᕐ ᐃᕶᑕᕦᕿᕑ:

- ᒋᕐ ᕿᕪᑊᕲᑕᕦᕿᕑ ᑖᓇ ᑊ ᕲᕑ ᒥᕳ<ᕳ"ᕑ ᕲ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊ ᑊᒋ ᕿᑊᕶ ᕲᕑ ᐃ"ᑕᑯᒻ, ᑊᒋ ᑖ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐃᕲᕑ"ᐃᕲᕶᕳ", ᓇᕶᑕ ᑊᒋ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᒥᒡᕵᕶᕿᕑ ᕲᕐᐄ ᕪᐱᕷ ᒣᕶᕳ ᐃᕶᕦᕿᕑ ᕲᑊ ᒋᕐ ᐃᕶᕦᕿᕑ ᕲᕤ" ᑖ ᑊᕪᕑ ᐃ"ᕳᕦᕿᕑ ᕲᕃ ᕲᑊ ᕲᕑ ᒣᕴᕳᕳ.
- ᕳᑕᕶ ᒋᕐ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᕹᐱᕹ ᕪᕑ ᐊᕴᕴᕑ ᒋᕐ ᕲᕑ ᕿᕪᑊᕲᑕᕦᕿᕑ ᑖ ᕲ ᐃᕹᐱᕹ ᓇᕶᕲᕶ"ᕲᒇᕳ ᕲᑊᕶ ᕲ ᒣᕤᕙᕵᕲ ᐊᕲᓯᕑ ᕲ ᕪᕑ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ ᑊᒋ ᕲ ᓇᕶᕲᕶᕲᒇᕳ ᑫᕿᒡ ᕿᕦᕳ.
- ᒋᕐ ᐃ"ᑕᑯᓇᕵ ᑖ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᒐᕶᑐ ᐊᓯᕐ ᕲᕳᓕᕶ ᕲᑊ ᐃᓯ ᓇᕶᕲᕶᕑ ᕲᑊᑐ ᒋᕐ ᑲᕑ"ᐳ·ᕲᑐ ᕲᑊ ᕲ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕲᑐ.

ᕲ ᐸᐍᕆᒧᕋ"ᐃᑲᕦ ᕲᒍᕶ ·ᕲᕵ"ᑕᒍᕳ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃ"ᕶᑲᕵᕳ ᕲ ᕪᕗᕲ ᕿᕪᑊᕵᕦᕿᕳ ᕲ ᐃᕳ<ᕑᕳ ᑊᒋ ᕵ ᒣᕴᕵ"ᕲᕦᕶ ᑖᕤᑕ ᕲ ᐃ"ᑕᑯᒻ ᐊᕐ"ᕲᕶᕶ ᕲ ᐊᕴᕑ"ᑲᔾ ᑫᕿᒡ ᒫᕴ ᕪ ᕵ ᕲᕑᐱᕪᒇᑊ ᕿᕦᕶ ᑖ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕷᕷᕶ, ᐊᕷᕶ ᐊᕐ ᕲᕶᕲ"ᕑ ᕲᕷ ᕲᕷᕤ"ᕲᕪᕲᕶᑐ ᐊᕲᓯᕵ, ᑊᒋ ᐸᐍᕆᒧᐊᕳ ᕲ ᕲ"ᑕᕦᕿᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᕳ<ᕑᕳ ᕿᕦᕶ ᑌᕤ, ᓇᕶᑕ ᑊᒋ ᕳᑕᕶᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᒡᐯᕴᑕ, ᓇᑌ ᒫᕴ ·ᕲᕵᕷ ᐃᓯ ᕷᕤᕲᕐ"ᕑ ᕵᕑ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕲ ᑖ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐱᒍᕵᕐᕲᒍᒻᕐ ᒐ ᐃᓯ ᑖ"ᑲᕶᕲᐁᕳ.

ᐊᕿᕶ" ᒫᕲᕑ ᕿᕪᐱᕷᕑᕲᑕ"ᕲᕶ ᑊ ᒥᕳᕴ·ᕲ"ᕦᕿᕿᕶᕳ

ᕲ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊ ᒍᕝ ᕲᕐᒎᑎᕋ"ᒍᒃ ᕲ ᐃ"ᑕᕲᕳ ᕲᕑ"ᕳ<ᕑᕵ ᑫᕶᓕ ᑖᕙ ᕵ ᒣᕴᕲᕶᕲ ᐃᓯ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕶ, ᕲ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕶᕲ: ᕲ ᐃ"ᑕᑯ"ᑲᕶᕲᕶ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᐈ, ᕲᕑᕶ ᕲᕶ"ᕲᕶᑐ ᐊᓯᕐ ᐊᕲᓯᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ, ᑊᒋ ᕶᑊ ᕶᕴᐳᕹ ᒐ ᐱᓰᐊᕳ ᑖ ᕲᑊᑐ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕶᕑ.

- ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᐈ ᕲ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕴ"ᑕᕦᕿᕲᕶᕲ": ᒫᕍ 122 ᕵ ᑖᕑᕶ ᐃᕵᕶ ᑕᕪᕹ ᕲᕷ ᕲᕶ"ᕲ·ᕲᑐ ᑖ ᑊᕵ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ ᒍᕝ ᕲᕐᒎᑎᕋ"ᒍᒃᒍ ᒫᕍ ᕵ ᕲᕶᕲᓇᒡᑐᕑ, 101 ᕲ ᑕᕴᕲᑐ ᕲᕷ ᕵ ᕲᕶᕵᑕᒐᕵᕶ ᕑᕵᕲ ᒋᕐ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᕲᑐᕳ. ᕲ ᑕᕴᕲᑐ ᒫᕍ ᕲᕲᕶ<ᕐᕵᑊᕵᕶ ᒍᕝ ᕲᕐᒎᑎᕋ"ᒍᒃ ᕿᕦᕳ 25% ᑕᕪᕹ ᐃᕵᕶ ᐊᓯᑌ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᕲᑐ ᐊᕿᕶ" ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᐈ ᑊ ᓇᕶᕲᕶᕳᕲᒇ"ᑲᕶᕲ ᒋᕐ ᐃᓯ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵ"ᕲᑕᕵᕿᕶᕲ ᕘ"ᕤ ᐃᔈᕑ ᐊᕲᕶᕑ. ᒫᕍ ᕲ ᐃᓯ ᑲᕲ·ᐊᕪᑕᕵᕿᕲ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕵᕶ ᐊᓯᑌ ᕲ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕴᕿᕲᑐ ᕲᕹᕤ ᐊᕐᕹᕥ 62% ᑕᕪᕹ ᐃᕵᕶᕵᐊᕳ ᑕᕑᕪᕲ ᕲᕷ ᕲᑖᕴᕶᕶᕲᕲᑐ ᕲ ᕙᕷᕲᓯᕳ ᐊᓯᑌ ᕵ<ᕑᕲᕲᑐ - ᕵᕑᕳ ᐃᕵ"ᕲᕹᕲ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᓇᕶᕲᕶ"ᕲᒇᕳ ᕑ< ᐃᕵ"ᕲᕹᕲ.

- ᑕᕪᕹ ᕲᕷ ᕲᕶ"ᕲᕳ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕗᐊᕦᐈ: ᐊᕶ ᒫᕍ ᑊ ᐃᕳᐱᕑᐱᕲᑐ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕗᐊᕦᓇᕶ ᕲᕹᕤ ᐊᕹ"ᕗ 63% ᑕᕪᕹ ᕵ ᕲᕶ"ᕲᑕᕑ ᑖ ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ, ᑊᒋ ᕶᑊ ᐊᕲᕶ ᐊᕐᒃᐳᕲ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊᕐ" ᑊ ᐃᓯ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕆᕲᑐ 66% ᕲ ᑕᕴᕲᑐ ᕵ ᕲᕶ"ᕲᑕᕵ - ᕲᕹᕤ ᕷᕶᕶ ᕲ ᑕᕴᕵᕶ ᐃᕵᕶ ᑊ ᐃᕳ<ᕑᕵ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᑎᐊᕑᒍᒻ ᑊ ᕐᒍᑕᒐᕴᕲᑐ ᐃᕵᕶᕪ ᐃᕵ ᐊ"ᕲᕲᓯᕑ". ᕵ ᐃ"ᕲᕷ ᐊᕲᕶ ᕲ ᕷᕗ"ᕳᕪᒇᕲᑐ ᒋᕐ

ᐸᔨᓕᖥᖅᐦᓵᐤ ᑕᓇᑕ ᐁᐸ ᐅᖅᖍ ᓂᐊᑐᐦᑕᐦᖥᖦᒻ ᐁ ᐊᕈᒥᐦᐃᖢᖦᖦᒻᔾ, ᑕ4 ᓐ ᐃᒡᒻᐃᔮᖮ ᐁ ᐊᕈᒥᐦᐃᔪᐦᑕᐤ ᐊᖥᐧᐊ ᐃᓲ ᒪᐦᑕᐦᒻᐦᑕᖮ,
ᖑᐨᑕ4ᓐ ᐃᐦᑕᐦᐧ ᐊᐁᐧᐧ ᐁ ᐊᕈᒥᐦᐃᔪᑕᖮ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᑐᖍ ᔨᑫᔾ ᐁ ᐃᓲ ᐊᕈᒥᐦᐃᔪᑕᖮ ᐅᐱᒍᐱᖥᐃᖤᐊᓂᐊᒻ×

- ᐁᐧᑌ ᐁ ᒻᗕᖢᔨᖮᖤᑕ ᑫᖤᐦᐧᐃᒍ: ᐊᒐ ᐊᔪᓯ ᐧᑫ ᒃᐦᖝ ᐅᖅᖍ ᔅᒻᖅᖌᐧᖔ ᑕᖮ ᑫ ᐃ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᔪᑕᖮ ᔮᐧᑊ ᐃᐦᑕᖥᓂᔾ ᑕᖮ ᑫ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᔪᑕᖮ ᑫᖤᖥᐃᓂᔾᐅᖅᖍ ᐊᓂᔾ ᑕᖮ ᑫ ᐃᓲ ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖅᑕᖥᔪᐢ ᖤᗡᒡ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᖝᐡᒻᖑᖅᖭᑕ4 ᒪᖮ ᖢᑫᖥ ᐊᔪᒍᐃᒻᐦ ᐁᔾ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᔪᑕᖮ× ᐅ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᑕᖮ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᒥᖤᖥ ᓐ ᐃᒡᒻᐃᐁᐧᐸ ᐊᓂ ᐁᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᒧᔮᐤ ᐁ ᐱᒥᖥᒻᐦ ᐁ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᖥᖦᖤ, ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐅᖅᖍ ᑥᐧᐅᖟᒥᔨᒍ ᐊᐧᖲ, ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᐊᔅᔪᐦᐃᔪᒡ ᐊᐧᖲ ᐅᐁ ᐃᖤᖥ ᐊᔅᒻ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᐊᐸᒍᔪᐢ×

ᓇᒍᐃ ᒻᔾᐅᖍ ᐃᐦᑕᒡᐧᐨ ᑕᖮ ᐃ ᐃᕐᐱᒍᔪᐦᖤᑊ ᒍᐧᑊ ᐅᖥᒍᒻᐧᖘᔾ ᐁ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᖤᖜᑊ, ᓐ ᐸᐦᒍᖥᖮ ᓅᖥᔮ ᖤᖥᒍᒥᐦ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᐊᐸᒍᓂᐢ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᖤᓂᐦᖤ ᐃᓲ ᖑᐨ ᐊᒻᑌᐃᖤᒻ ᐊᓂ ᐅᖅᖍ ᐱᒻᖝᑕᖥᖤᒍᐢ ᔨᑫᔾ ᐁ ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖅᑕᒡᐃᐢ× ᒻᔾᖥ ᐱᒻᖝᑕᔪᐧ ᐁ ᐱᖮᐦᑫᐢ ᒻᖝᑕᖤᓂᐊᐦᔾ ᑕᖮ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᔪᐢ ᐊᐧᖲ, ᖑᐨᑕ4 ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᐁᐦᑲᐴ ᐊᓂ ᒻᖝᐡᒻᐦᖥᐨ ᖑᐨᑕ4ᐊᓂ ᐃᒡ4ᐱᖥᐨᒪᑊᒻᐁᐧ ᑫᐧᔨᐢ ᐅᐸ ᐃᐸᖇ ᑫ ᐃᐦᑫᖨ×

ᓈ ᐃᓲ ᓂᑐᐧᖥᐦᑕᒡᒻ

ᐊᓂ ᒻᖮ ᒧᔨᐧᔪᒻ ᐊᐸ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᐃᐢ ᒍᐧᑊ ᐅᖥᒍᒻᐧᖘᔾ ᐱᒻᖝᖤᖮᒡᐨ ᓐ ᑫᖝᐧᐊᐧᖥᖤᖥ ᑕᖮ ᑫ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖤᑊ ᐁᐦ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᖥᖦᒻ ᐊᓂᐊ ᐅᖍ ᐁᐦ ᐃᐦᖤᖥ ᐁᐦᑕᒡᖝᒐ ᔨᑫᔾ ᐁ ᐃᐦ ᒻᖝᒻᕐᖝᖤᖥ ᐅᐸ ᐃᓲ ᖑᐡᒻᖥᒻ×

ᖑᐡᒻᖥᒻ ᐅᐸ ᐃᓲ ᐃᐦᑕᒡᖥᖤᐁᐧ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᐃᐢ ᐤ ᐁ ᐃᓲᖤᖥᖥᖤ ᐁ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᐨ ᒍᐧᑊ ᐅᖥᒍᒻᐧᖘᔾ ᖤᖤᖘ ᒧᔨ ᐊᔨᐡᖤᖥ ᑕᖮ ᐊᖢᒐ ᐧᔮᖝ ᐃ"ᔭᑕᐦᖤᖮ× ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖤᒡᐧ ᐤᔾᐧ ᐱᔮᐢ ᐃᓲ ᑕᔪᐦᑫᖤᒻ ᐁ ᐊᔅᔾᐃᖦᖝᒐ ᐧᖔ ᐧᑫ ᑕᒡᖝᖥᐧᐁᔾ ᒻᖝᑕᒍᐧᐧᐁᖥᐧ ᖤᖝᑊ ᐊᓂ ᐃᒣᑊ ᐊᐧᖥ ᐃ ᐃᐸᖝᒍᒻᒻᖥᖮ×ᐢᑎᐢ, ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐃᐊᔨᐡᖤᖥ ᔨᑫᔾ ᖑᓂᐧᖥᖤᒻ ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᖝᖥᖮ, ᑕ4 ᓈ ᐃᐦᑕᒡᐧ ᑕᖮ ᓈ ᐃᐦᖝᖥᖮ ᐁ ᓂᑐ ᒻᖝᖥᖝᒻᐦ ᖘᐊᖮᐃᐧᖗᖝ ᖑᐨᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᓈ ᐃᓲ ᖤᑫᖥᓂᖥᖤᖤ ᐁ ᐊᕈᒥᐦᐃᖢᖥ× ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᐊᖤᐤ ᐁ ᐅᖍ ᐃᒡᒻᐊᖥᖮᔾ ᐁᒡᐤ ᐊᓂ ᐅᖍ ᔪᒥᕐᖥᖤᔾ ᐊᓂ ᐊᔨᐡᖤᖥᒻᖤ×ᔾ, ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᒻᔾ ᓂᔪᑐᐦᖨᖥᖮ, ᑕ4 ᒧᔮᐤ ᖑᐨ ᒐᐃᖥ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᒻᔾᔑᖤᑫᐧᖥᒻᐦ ᐊᐧᖲ ᐅᖤᖝᑕᔪᐃᐢ×

ᒻᔾᐧ ᑕᖮ ᐁ ᐃᓲ ᑫᖝᐧᐊᐧᖥᖤᖥ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᐧᐅᒡ ᐤ ᒻᖮ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᒥᖤᖥᖮ ᒻᖤᖮ ᓂᔪᑐᐦᑕᖥ ᓈᒡ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦᖤᖮ ᐊᓂ ᖥᑕᐦᖤᖮ ᐊᐧᖥᖮ ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲ ᐊᔪᑫᖘᐃᖮ ᒻᖝᑕᒍᐧᐁᖥᖮ ᐧᑫ ᐊᖮᖮ ᐊᓂ ᐃᓲᐦᖤᒻ ᐊᐸ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᖥᔾᐃᖥᖝᑊ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᐁ ᑫᖝᐧᐊᐧᖥᖤᖥᖤᖥ ᐊᓂᔾ ᒻᔾ ᐃᐦᑕᖝ ᐊᐸ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᖥᖤ ᐅᖍᐢ ᐊᓂᔾ ᐁᐊᖥᒡ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᑕᖮ ᐧᑫ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᖥᐢ ᐊᐧᖲ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᓂᔾ ᒻᔾ ᑫᖝᐧᐊᐧᖥᖤᖥᖮ ᒻᖮ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᖑᓂᐧᖥᖤᒻᖤᖥ ᑕ4 ᑦᐧ ᐁ ᐊᔅᑫᖥᖮᖥᖗᖝ ᒻᖝᑕᒍᐧᐁᖤᑊ ᑫ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᔪᖥᖗᖝ ᐊᓂᔾ ᖑᒻᑌ ᒻᔾ ᐃᓲ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᖥᔾ ᑕ4 ᒻᖮ ᖝᐡᖥᐅᖥᖗᐢ ᐁ ᐊᕈᒥᖤᖮ ᒻᖮ ᐁ ᒻᔾᐧᖝᖥᖗᖤ ᐊᓂᔾ ᐊᖝᒧᐊᖥᔾ ᓈ ᐊᐧᑕᓂᐢ ᐁ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᖥᖤᖮ×

ᔪᒻ ᒻᖮ ᐊᐃᖤᑫᒻᖥᖤ ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᐃᖥ ᐃᖝᑌᐢ ᐁ ᐧᐊᖝᖦᐧᐃᖥᖦᒻ ᑕ4 ᐁ ᐃᓲᖤᖥᖤᖮ× ᐁᔾ ᒻᖮ ᓂᖥᐡᐡᖝᖤᖥᖤ ᑕᖝᑌ ᐁᐦᒍᖥᖨ ᐧᑫ ᓇᐃᐦᑫᖘᖥᖮ, ᐧᔮᑑᖥᔾ ᐊᐧᖝᖮ ᓂᐃᒡ ᐁ ᐃᐱᐦᑎᐧᖗᖮ, ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᐧᖥᖓ ᐊᓂ ᐃᒡᒻᐃᐧᖮ ᐃᖣᖗᐧ× ᐃᖥᐦᖤᒻᖢ ᐃᐃᖤᐦᒥ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᐃᐢ, ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖤᒡᐧ ᒻᔾᐧ ᐊᓂ ᐁᐦᑕᒻᐦ ᐁ ᐅᖍ ᐃᒡᒻᐊᖥᔪᖤ ᐊᐧᖲ, ᐁ ᓂᖤ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᒥᔪᔮᖤ, ᐅᑕᖍᖤ ᐁ ᖤᑫᐧᖥᖤᔪᐢ, ᐃᒡᒻᐊᐧᐃᐢᖗᖝ ᐊᓂ ᐅᖍ ᐃᒡᒻᐃᔪᖮ ᑕ4 ᐧᑎᖝᖤᖤᑫᐢᖤ ᐊᓂ ᐊᖝᖮ ᔨᑫᔾ ᐁ ᐱᒍᖥᖤᓂᔾ ᐁ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᐃᔪᖮ× ᐊᓂᒻ ᐧᖥᖝ ᖤᐃᒡᒻᐃᔪᖮᔾ ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖤᒡᖮᔾ ᒻᖝ ᑕᓇᑕ ᖑᖤᐧᐊᖝᖮ ᒻᔾ ᐃᒡᒻᐊᐧᖥᖤ ᑕ4ᒻᔾᐧ ᒻᔾ ᓂᖤ ᒻᖝᐡᖥᖥᑊ ᖤᐃᒡᒻᐃᔪᖤᐧᖗᐢ×

ᐁᒡ ᒻᖮ, ᐅᖥᔾ ᐊᐸᒍᖥᐃᒻ ᒻᖝᑕᒡᓂᐃᐦᒻ ᒍᐧᑊ ᐅᖥᒍᒻᐧᖘᔾ ᐁ ᐃᐦᑐᐢ ᐁ ᐅᖍ ᐃᒡ4ᐡᖤᖥᖤ×ᒻᖥᖮ ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖤᒡᐧ ᐊᓂ ᐃᐊᔨᖤᖥᖦᒻ ᑕᖮ ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᖝᖥᖮ ᐊᓂ ᒻᔾ ᐃᐁᐧᖤᐨᑊ ᐧᐃᖝᐟᖥᖤᐧ ᐊᒡ ᒻᖮ ᐃᖦᖮ× ᓇᒍᐃ ᐧᔮᑊ ᐊᐧᖲ ᐃᑫᖥ ᒻᔨᐧᔪᖮᒻᖮ ᐤᖥ; ᓂᑐᐧᖥᖤᒡᐧ ᒧᒻ ᐊᓂ ᐃᐦᑕᒡ ᑕᖮ ᓈ ᐃᓲ ᐊᐸᒍᔾᐦᐃᖥᖦᒻ ᐁᐧ ᐃᐦᑐᐢ ᐊᓂ ᑫᖝᐧᖥᖤᒡᐧ, ᐊᐦᑌᐃᒻ ᐊᓂ ᒻᔾ ᓂᐦᑕᒧᖤᖥᖮ ᑕ4 ᐊᓂ ᒻᔨᐧᔪᐦᑕᒡᖤᖮ ᔨᑫᔾ ᐊᓂᔾ ᐧᐡᖤᑫᐧᐡᐁᐧᖤᖮ×

ᒻᖝᑊ ᔨᑫᐢ

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SOMMAIRE

OBJECTIF

Le rapport final du programme Emploi technique avec d'Hydro-Québec (ETHQ) présente une rétrospective complète d'une initiative visant à former des bénéficiaires cris et à leur offrir des possibilités d'emploi dans des postes techniques à Hydro-Québec. Élaboré dans le cadre de l'Entente concernant l'emploi des Cris (Eeyou Apatisiiwin Niskamoon) de 2002, le programme visait à lutter contre les disparités dans le domaine de l'emploi et à assurer la mise en oeuvre d'engagements de longue date pris dans le cadre d'ententes telles que la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois (1975) et la Convention La Grande (1986).

PORTÉE ET MÉTHODOLOGIE

Le rapport documente l'évolution, la gestion et les résultats du programme ETHQ de 2002 à 2017. Grâce à des partenariats avec Hydro-Québec, la Commission scolaire crie et divers établissements de formation, la Société Apatisiiwin (devenue par la suite la Société Niskamoon) a géré le programme et aidé les étudiantes et les étudiants cris en leur fournissant une formation dans quatre domaines techniques : électriciens d'appareillage, mécaniciens d'appareillage, électriciens en automatismes et techniciens en télécommunications.

Le rapport a été rédigé dans le but de recueillir les expériences et les points de vue des personnes ayant participé au programme ETHQ afin de transmettre leurs connaissances au profit des générations futures. Plus précisément, le rapport vise à :

- examiner l'historique et les réalisations du programme, ainsi que les leçons qui en ont été tirées, afin d'en profiter et d'éviter de répéter les efforts passés;
- compiler des données financières afin de fournir une vue d'ensemble de l'évolution des budgets au fil du temps en fonction de la hausse du nombre d'inscriptions et des besoins évalués;
- émettre des recommandations concrètes destinées aux responsables de futurs programmes de formation professionnelle inspirés du même modèle.

Le rapport renferme des données qualitatives et quantitatives tirées d'une série de sources primaires, notamment des entretiens, des rapports de programme et des données financières, l'accent étant mis sur les retombées à long terme.

PRINCIPALES CONCLUSIONS

Le programme ETHQ est largement considéré comme une réussite selon trois indicateurs de rendement significatifs : résultats en matière d'emploi, taux de diplomation et renforcement des capacités à long terme.

- **Résultats en matière d'emploi** : au total, 122 diplômées et diplômés cris ont été embauchés par Hydro-Québec; sur ce chiffre, 101 ont obtenu un poste permanent. Les employées et les employés cris représentaient près de 25 % de l'effectif d'Hydro-Québec dans les catégories d'emploi ciblées sur le territoire d'Eeyou Istchee. Les femmes cries occupaient 62 % de tous les postes permanents sur ce même territoire, un pourcentage bien supérieur à la représentation proportionnelle.

- **Taux de diplomation** : le taux de diplomation global atteint dans le cadre du programme est de 63 % et de 66 % des programmes professionnels, soit plus du double de la moyenne des · étudiantes et étudiants cris inscrits dans des études postsecondaires à l'extérieur des étudiantes et étudiants cris inscrits dans des études postsecondaires à l'extérieur des communautés.

L'apport soutien des services de soutien ont aidé les participantes et les participants à surmonter les difficultés linguistiques, scolaires et personnelles auxquelles elles et ils ont fait face durant leur parcours.

- **Renforcement des capacités** : les étudiantes et les étudiants qui n'ont pas terminé la formation ont tout de même acquis de précieuses compétences grâce aux cours préalables et aux programmes linguistiques. L'initiative a contribué à renforcer l'apprentissage à long terme, la confiance et la préparation à l'emploi sur le territoire d'Eeyou Istchee.

En plus d'atteindre ses objectifs, le programme ETHQ a jeté les bases pour de futures activités de formation et de développement dirigées tout de même par la Nation Crie. Les retombées du programme continuent d'orienter l'éducation, l'emploi et les partenariats dans la région.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Le succès du programme ETHQ s'est accompagné d'enseignements précieux qui peuvent éclairer les initiatives futures.

Tout nouveau programme de formation inspiré du programme ETHQ devrait d'abord faire l'object d'une planification stratégique. Il est recommandé de prévoir une année entière de préparation pour définir les rôles des partenaires, fixer les objectifs et établir des protocoles d'évaluation et de communication. L'affectation d'une ou d'un responsable à cette tâche peut favoriser la collaboration, dissiper les malentendus et assurer la responsabilisation à long terme.

La formation doit s'appuyer sur une analyse claire du marché du travail. Connaître dès le départ les emplois disponibles et le niveau de préparation des étudiantes et des étudiants permet d'éviter les écarts entre la conception du programme et les résultats en matière d'emploi. Les programmes doivent tenir compte à la fois des exigences professionnelles et de l'état réel de préparation des étudiantes et des étudiants, en particulier en ce qui concerne les cours préalables et les compétences linguistiques.

Il faut s'efforcer de concevoir des programmes adaptés à la culture et aux besoins de la Nation Crie. Cela consiste entre autres choses à passer en revue les évaluations pour en détecter les biais, à faire participer les familles aux étapes clés et à élaborer des stratégies ciblées pour accroître la participation des femmes cries. Lorsque la formation doit avoir lieu en dehors du territoire, un soutien complet comprenant des services de garde d'enfants, des services psychosociaux et des logements est indispensable au maintien de l'effectif étudiant. Les services de soutien doivent être souples, et leur efficacité doit être évaluée de manière continue.

Enfin, les programmes qui s'inspirent du programme ETHQ doivent s'inscrire dans une stratégie de réconciliation plus globale. La promotion de l'emploi des Autochtones ne peut pas être une initiative isolée, mais doit être liée aux engagements à long terme en faveur de la sécurité culturelle, du développement communautaire et d'un changement systémique.

CONCLUSION

Les retombées du programme ETHQ vont bien au-delà de ce qu'il apporte à ses diplômées et diplômés. Il constitue un modèle de réconciliation fondée sur la collaboration et axée sur les capacités. Le présent rapport final rend compte de toutes les réalisations et de ce qu'il est possible de faire. Il s'agit d'un bilan autant que d'une feuille de route à l'appui de d'éventuels programmes de formation destinés aux Cris qui se fondent sur le respect mutuel, la prospérité partagée et la réussite pour et par la Nation Crie.

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01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of the **Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) Program Final Report** is to provide a comprehensive description of the training and permanent employment program developed for Cree beneficiaries to work for Hydro-Québec in Eeyou Istchee. Providing **a detailed historical framework and analysis** will help current and future Cree leaders and partners understand the efforts needed to support such a training program and learn about the overall potential benefits for all involved. Consequently, this report is **an essential tool** for any potential future training programs with comparable goals and partnerships.

1.2 FOREWORD

Hydro-Québec, a provincial public utility, produces, manages, and distributes electricity generated throughout Quebec, including in Eeyou Istchee, accounting for approximately half of the province's installed capacity. With such a large-scale resource extraction on Cree land, obtaining and maintaining a social license to operate is essential for them to work in harmony with neighbouring communities as well as for the long-term success of the corporation. Achieving this requires not only engaging with Cree communities, but also actively investing in their development and inclusion.

A significant initiative in this regard was the training of Cree people, aimed at providing access to gainful permanent employment opportunities within Hydro-Québec. To this end, several agreements between the Cree Nation and Hydro-Québec included provisions related to training and employment. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) laid the foundation, providing for preferential hiring, training, and recruitment for planned Hydro-Québec developments. This was followed by La Grande (1986) Agreement that enabled the development of the Formation et intégration de la main-d'oeuvre autochtone (FIMA) program, which ran from 1987 to 1995 with the goal of 150 James Bay Cree beneficiaries attaining Hydro-Québec permanent employment.

The mixed success of the FIMA program led to the signing of a new agreement in 2002 - the **Cree Employment Agreement (Eeyou Apatisiiwin Niskamon)**. This Agreement aimed "to achieve the objective of having, by March 31st, 2017, a minimum of one hundred fifty (150) James Bay Crees employed in permanent positions within Hydro-Québec and located within the James Bay region." While this new agreement maintained the original goal of 150 permanent employees, it established more effective mechanisms and means than the previous program, including allowing for a longer implementation period of fifteen years.

The resulting hiring initiative, known as the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) program, offered James Bay Cree beneficiaries formal training designed to meet Hydro-Québec's hiring requirements for four positions within the organization, which were Apparatus Electricians, Apparatus Mechanics, Automation Electricians, and Telecommunications Technicians. The Apatisiiwin Corporation (later to be merged into the Niskamoon Corporation) was entrusted with developing, implementing, and managing this program, with various partners playing crucial roles in its operation.

In August 2003, the first cohort of Cree students began their training at the Centre Polymétier in Rouyn-Noranda, bringing the TEHQ program to life. This report chronicles the evolution of the TEHQ program from recruitment to employment, offering insights and lessons that can inform the development of similar future programs.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

We set out to write this report with the goal of capturing the experiences and perspectives of those who were involved in the TEHQ program, in an effort to bring their knowledge forward for the benefit of future generations. Specifically, we wanted to:

- Explore the program's history, accomplishments, and lessons learned to build on its insights and avoid duplicating past efforts.

- Compile financial information to provide an overview of how budgets evolved over time as a function of both increasing enrolment and assessed needs.

- Develop practical recommendations for managers and administrators of similar future professional training programs.

Given these goals, our research focused on primary sources developed during the time of the TEHQ program. This included, but is not limited to, meeting minutes, annual reports, consulting analyses, policies, interview transcripts, and presentations. We also cross-referenced other reports for specifics like program names and quantitative data. We extend our thanks to everyone who helped us to access these sources, as well as those who made themselves available to answer questions and provide personal accounts of the TEHQ program management. The participation and open collaboration of many individuals allowed us to compile a meaningful history and establish important insights.

Although there were many excellent sources to pull from to produce this report, there were some limitations, particularly regarding quantitative data.[1] Regular program evaluations did not take place during the life of the TEHQ program and there was no centralized data collection, so numbers were often inconsistent. Most figures were pulled from Niskamoon Corporation reports and presentations. This was complemented with data obtained from the Cree School Board, as reported by Andrea Kitchen of S&P consulting in the report "Overview of Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec Program."

It is important to consider, when consulting data in this report, that a large number of students took on non-linear educational paths, such as participating in preparatory programs, dropping in and out of the program, and taking multiple years to complete training. This results at times in disparate datasets, especially considering that no clear directives on how to track data were established at the outset. Notably, a recommendation to create a clear and consistent system for collecting key data was one of the lessons learned detailed in this document.

In organizing this report, we elected to take a chronological approach, with a different journey explored in each section. In section two, entitled "Background", we trace the journey of the Cree Nation, detailing the agreements and milestones that led to the signing of the Cree Employment Agreement and development of the TEHQ program. In section three, entitled "Program Management", we follow the journey of the program managers, explaining how the program evolved year after year. Finally, in section four, entitled "Analysis," we explore the program from the perspective of a student, beginning with recruitment and ending with work integration. Overall, this structure allows us to tell the story of the TEHQ program while providing takeaways, tips, and lessons learned at each critical stop along the way.
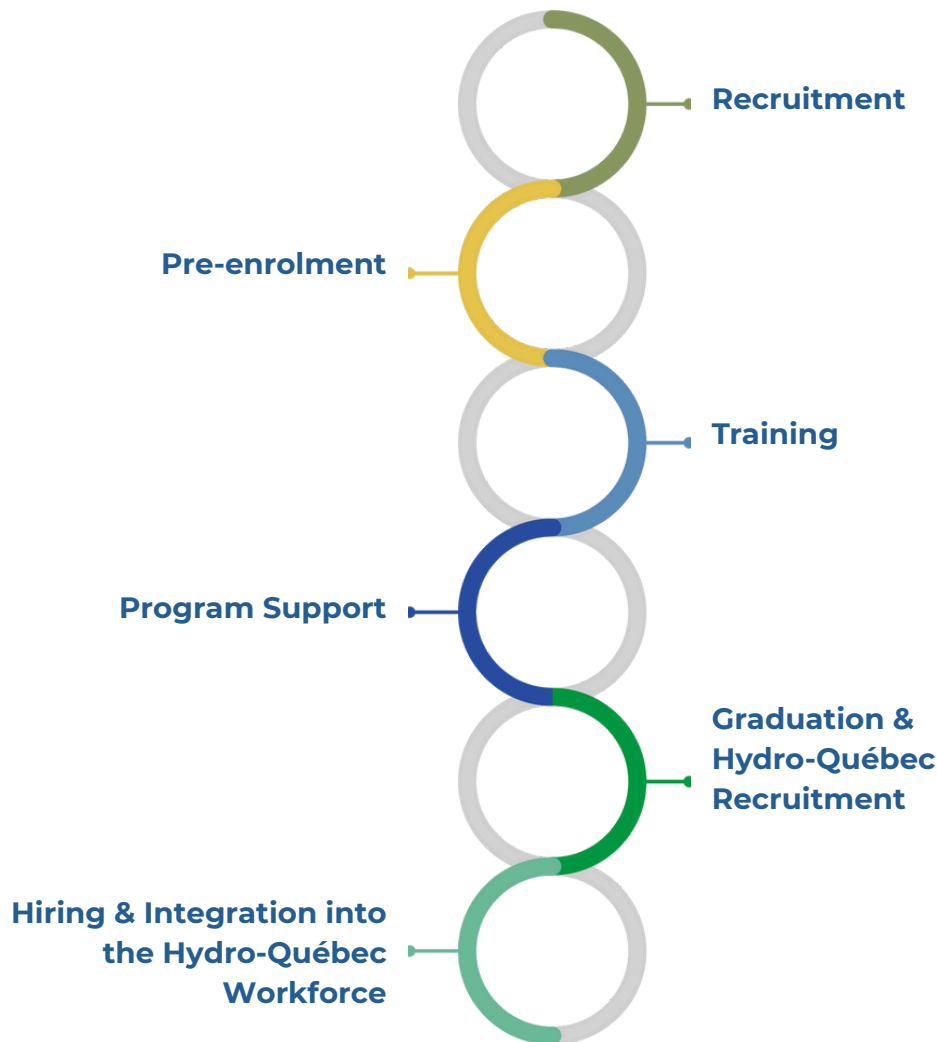
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[1] Please note that this report was prepared quite some time after the TEHQ program concluded, limiting the ability to independently verify all figures. Therefore, the data should be viewed as general guidance rather than precise totals.

As the "Background" section will clarify, the TEHQ program story did not begin with a single Agreement. Likewise, it did not end in 2017. The legacy of the program remains in the Cree Nation, and there are many lessons learned that can serve as a building block for future programs of this kind. We strongly encourage reading the full report to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's year-by-year, step-by-step evolution.

Finally, as the report will make clear, although overseen by the Niskamoon Corporation, a training initiative of this nature could not succeed without the vital contributions of dedicated partners such as Hydro-Québec, the Cree School Board, various academic institutions, and the municipalities where the students attended school.

Now, let us explore this remarkable journey.

THE PATH OF A TYPICAL TEHQ STUDENT

Recruitment

Pre-enrolment

Training

Program Support

Graduation & Hydro-Québec Recruitment

Hiring & Integration into the Hydro-Québec Workforce

02

BACKGROUND

Section 2 of this report provides contextual information concerning past agreements signed by the Cree Nation with the Quebec government, or directly with Hydro-Québec, which were relevant to the development of the TEHQ Program.

2.1 JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT (JBNQA) (1975)

Signed on November 11, 1975, the JBNQA is described by many as the "first Modern Treaty" in Canada. According to the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), this agreement "created a new legal and eventually a constitutional framework for, among other things, local self-governance, land management, protection of the traditional Cree way of life as well as the relationship between the Québec and the Indigenous peoples of the James Bay and Northern Québec region."

For this report, it is important to note that the JBNQA set the stage early on for the training and employment programs, notably in terms of the expectation for training of Crees for employment on the territory. In particular, two sections of this agreement refer to training with the pursuit of working at Hydro-Québec, thereby creating a precedent for the TEHQ program. These are:

Section 8.14: Preferential Provisions for Project Employment and Contracts for the Crees in connection with the La Grande project by Hydro-Québec / Société d'énergie de la Baie-James (SEBJ)

La Société d'énergie de la Baie James and Hydro-Québec undertake their mandate and power to implement preferential arrangements to permit the Crees within their capabilities to obtain employment and competitive contracts on the Le Complexe La Grande (1975). More specifically, La Societe d'energie de la Baie James and Hydro-Québec undertake to:

8.14.1 Continue and improve procedures already in effect for employment during the construction of Le Complexe La Grande (1975), including transmission lines within the Territory.

8.14.2 Encourage within their mandate and power training and apprenticeship programs with particular emphasis on the need for the Crees to learn the higher skills within the construction industry such as electric installation, plumbing, carpentry, masonry and repair of equipment.

8.14.3 Study the implementation of a program to permit Crees to be educated and/or trained to meet the requirements for permanent employment in operation, maintenance and administration of Le Complexe La Grande (1975).

Section 28.9: Training Courses, Job Recruitment and Placement provided by Québec and Canada with regards to "jobs created by existing or planned developments in the Territory".

28.9.1 Canada and Quebec shall, on proposals from the Cree local governments or Cree Regional Authority, provide, within their budgetary restraints to Cree individuals or groups, the full range of training programs or facilities and of job recruitment and placement services they require in order to qualify for jobs created by existing or planned developments in the Territory, and assume the costs of such programs and facilities.

28.9.2 The programs shall be of such nature as to qualify candidates to meet the specific requirements of existing and eventual job and business opportunities in Cree settlements, in the Territory and elsewhere, particularly in the economic sectors related to the associations established and the undertakings contained in this Section.

28.9.3 Quebec and Canada shall assure that unilingual Cree candidates who successfully complete training course shall have the right to be examined either in the Cree language or with the assistance of a translator. Applicants for jobs in the public service will, however, be required to possess sufficient knowledge of one of the two official languages, as may be specified.

28.9.4 All candidates who complete a training program and pass the examination should be assured of either apprentice card certification or official qualification permits so as to qualify to be employed in the field of such training.

These sections demonstrate that the Cree leadership at the time recognized the potential employment opportunity with Hydro-Québec from the start. If one is to understand the TEHQ program, these sections of the JBNQA are vital starting points.

2.2 LA GRANDE AGREEMENT (1986) AND FIMA PROGRAM

The La Grande (1986) Agreement was signed on November 6, 1986. It was instrumental in initiating the training programs to work at Hydro-Québec, as outlined in section 11.2.1 of the agreement:

> **11.2.1** *Hydro-Québec undertakes to take definitive measures to hire and train the largest number of James Bay Crees practical for its operations in the James Bay area. The objective of the parties is to have 150 Crees employed in permanent Hydro-Québec jobs within Le Complexe La Grande (1975) by 1996.*

This led to the creation of the FIMA program (Formation et intégration de la main-d'oeuvre autochtone), which ran from 1987 to 1995. Over this nine-year period, ninety-two Cree students took part in one of three training programs. While fifty successfully graduated from a vocational program, very few became permanent employees at Hydro-Québec.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE FIMA PROGRAM

Type of Training	# of Trainees			Employment Status (Sept 2000)			
	At the Start	At the End	Completion Rate	Permanent Employment	Recall List	Dismissed & Resigned	Deceased & Disabled
Office Work	27	9	33%	0	5	-	-
Electrician	38	23	61%	11	7	3	1
Mechanic	27	18	67%	0	14	3	1
TOTAL	**92**	**50**	**54%**	**11**	**26**	**6**	**2**

SOURCE: ECONOTEC, 2001

By September 2000, only eleven FIMA program graduates were working at Hydro-Québec. Of the twenty-six people who were on the recall list for temporary employment, only fifteen were still interested in working for Hydro-Québec (the job categories of these fifteen individuals are currently unknown).

In 1995, training and hiring initiatives under the La Grande (1986) Agreement were put on hold. During this time, both parties considered how they could learn from the experience of the FIMA program to increase the number of Cree people in permanent positions at Hydro-Québec.

The experience of the FIMA program, and the reflection that followed, was foundational to the subsequent Cree Employment Agreement. Lessons learned from this nine-year training program included:

- The need for a clear governance structure, including a dedicated organization to oversee the project.
- Strong Cree involvement in program implementation, ensuring that community realities and success factors unique to Cree students were understood and responded to.
- More "means and mechanisms," including support for students, community programming in math and sciences, and increased human resources support to integrate Cree workers.

Timing was also a factor in the success of this program. In 1996, Hydro-Québec was in a period of layoffs, making such a program difficult to maintain. Additionally, Cree graduates were faced with "social pressures exerted in the communities on Crees working for [Hydro-Québec] because of the on-going conflicts," (Econotec, 2001) as tensions around the proposed Great Whale project were rising in the communities. This demonstrates how the success of training and employment programs can be impacted not only by the internal workings of the program, but the larger environmental and political context. Indeed, making improvements to the structure of the program and restarting it at the right time would be key to the success of the next iteration of the training and employment program.

Overall, despite its challenges, the FIMA program was a critical precursor for the subsequent Cree Employment Agreement, both in establishing the legal framework for Hydro-Québec's obligations around training and employment and in providing the experience and insight.

Why was the goal set at 150 permanent positions?

The goal of hiring 150 Crees into permanent positions was first articulated in La Grande (1986) Agreement and later carried over to the Cree Employment Agreement.

From the outset, this was an aspirational figure based on maximizing the potential opportunities to the Cree people. The number originated from discussions related to Cree employment during Phase II of La Grande complex. Cree leaders wanted 300-400 Crees to have employment opportunities from the development, while Hydro-Québec estimated that between 130-150 jobs would be available. Based on these figures, the parties agreed to a plan that would provide training to at least 300 Crees. They estimated that 50% of these trainees would successfully transition to employment at Hydro-Québec, thereby setting the final goal at 150 permanent employees.[2]

While all parties worked in good faith towards this shared goal, it was understood that the number was connected to potential jobs rather than actual viability. Indeed, a 2004 Econotec feasibility study reported that it was likely not a feasible objective due to the low number of graduates and French fluency levels amongst the Cree people.

In light of this reality, the people involved in the project focused on training and employing the maximum number of Cree people under the agreement, as well as creating long-lasting social and economic benefits by using the TEHQ program to improve training, hiring, and retention practices (for example, by identifying cultural barriers to the French competency test and investing in better science and French programming for Cree youth).

By that measure, this work was both a great success and a critical learning opportunity for the Cree Nation. The final tally of 138 trained students and 101 graduates employed in permanent positions by March 2017 was a remarkable feat considering the challenges that were faced from the beginning.

[2] Information provided by Réal Courcelles (personal communication, 2024).

2.3 CREE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT (EEYOU APATISIIWIN NISKAMON) AND APATISIIWIN CORPORATION (2002)

On February 7, 2002, the Grand Council of the Crees and the Government of Quebec signed the Paix des Braves (the Agreement Concerning the New Relationship between the Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec). This landmark Nation-to-Nation agreement settled several disputes regarding the implementation of the JBNQA, bringing an end to a years-long hold on agreements between the Cree people and Hydro-Québec.

With these issues resolved, the parties were able to proceed with the signing of the Cree Employment Agreement[3], which aimed to:

"...fulfill Hydro-Québec's contractual obligations under the La Grande (1986) Agreement, namely, to have 150 Crees employed in permanent Hydro-Québec positions [and] to provide for more effective mechanisms to ensure that this undertaking is attained."

Source: Agreements between Hydro-Québec, the Société d'énergie de la Baie James and the Crees of Québec: Summaries, Hydro-Québec, February 7, 2002.

While the Cree Employment Agreement contained many of the same terms as the La Grande (1986) Agreement, it introduced some new provisions informed by lessons learned from the results of the FIMA program. Specifically, the new Agreement:

- Increased training timeframe from 10 to 15 years;

- Defined a specific company, the Apatisiiwin Corporation, to oversee the implementation of the agreement (the previous agreement had assigned it to the Eeyou Corporation, which had a broader mandate);

- Guaranteed dedicated funds in the form of indexed annuity payments, ensuring the Apatisiiwin Corporation would have the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate.

Under the Agreement, the Cree Nation was responsible for training the Cree candidates and developing a range of complementary hiring initiatives. To oversee these efforts, the Apatisiiwin Corporation, later consolidated into the Niskamoon Corporation, was created to oversee this work. The Corporation was governed by a Board of Directors consisting of five members appointed by the Cree Regional Authority (which later became the Cree Nation Government) and three members appointed by Hydro-Québec. This structure was designed to ensure collaborative decision-making between the two parties in the implementation of the Agreement.

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[3] The Boumhounan Agreement and Nadoshtin Agreement, both of which each had $1.5 M earmarked for training, were also signed on this day.

1

To facilitate, foster and encourage the employment of James Bay Crees.

2

To reduce barriers to the employment of James Bay Crees.

3

To create employment opportunities for James Bay Crees.

4

To promote the general welfare of the James Bay Crees, improve the employment conditions of the James Bay Crees, and to provide training, employment and economic opportunities for the James Bay Crees.

5

To provide a framework for improved relations between the James Bay Crees and Hydro-Québec in regard to employment and employment opportunities.

Meeting these objectives would require a multi-faceted action plan that included not only training and recruitment, but also hiring initiatives such as career guidance programs and work integration.

The initiatives they were responsible to develop were outlined in the agreement as follows:

> **5.2** *Hiring Initiatives will be designed, developed, approved, managed and implemented by the Apatisiiwin Corporation (later changed to the Niskamoon Corporation) and will address in particular the following:*
>
> **a.** *training to assist James Bay Crees to meet Hydro-Québec Hiring Requirements for Permanent Positions within Hydro-Québec;*
>
> **b.** *scholarships, in-house training initiatives, prizes, etc. to encourage James Bay Crees to meet Hydro-Québec Hiring Requirements for Permanent Positions within Hydro-Québec;*
>
> **c.** *development of career guidance programs addressed to Cree Youth and related to the disciplines set out in subsection 5.1.1;*
>
> **d.** *hiring through a Cree Enterprise of one or more coordinators to assist in meeting the objectives;*
>
> **e.** *funding of French language training and French immersion support for James Bay Crees seeking or who have secured employment with Hydro- Québec;*
>
> **f.** *translation of Hydro-Québec external hiring postings and requirements and other related documentation;*
>
> **g.** *other initiatives approved by the Apatisiiwin Corporation (later changed to Niskamoon Corporation) to assist James Bay Crees in obtaining employment with Hydro-Québec;*
>
> **h.** *reasonable administrative and management costs related to the above.*

Hydro-Québec, for its part, would provide an Employment Fund to pay for training and hiring initiatives under this agreement that were not already covered through pre-existing government programs.

Overall, this agreement gave the Cree people the power and responsibility to organize training and employment programs. Hydro-Québec committed to support these efforts through funding and, when required, collaboration. This gave Cree administrators the freedom to establish partnerships and programs that responded directly to community needs, which undoubtedly made the initiatives more successful. It also laid an important foundation for community-led collaboration between Hydro-Québec and many Cree people, and the positive impact this had on the relationship between the two parties can still be felt to this day.

2.4 NISKAMOON AGREEMENT (2004-2019)

On August 31, 2004, the non-profit corporation Niskamoon Corporation assumed administrative duties from the Apatisiiwin Corporation, the Opimiscow Company, the Eeyou Namess Corporation, and the Nadoshtin Company under the Niskamoon Agreement. This new corporation was mandated to implement five Cree-Hydro-Québec Impact-Benefit Agreements, including the Apatisiiwin Agreement. The creation of the Niskamoon Corporation was largely administrative, such that the substance of each individual Agreement was not altered. Consequently, the Niskamoon Corporation inherited all obligations originally given to the Apatisiiwin Corporation in the Cree Employment agreement.

The Cree Employment Agreement was updated accordingly, most notably section 3.10, which now read:

> **3.10** *It is intended that the Niskamoon Corporation continue its mandate under this Agreement until there is no significant amount of money left in the Employment Fund. In the event of dissolution or winding-up of the Niskamoon Corporation, the assets of the Niskamoon Corporation devoted to the implementation of this Agreement, if any shall be delivered, transferred or turned over to, or be assumed by, one or more non-profit legal entities designated by the CRA (now CNG) and Hydro-Québec having objects similar to those set out in this Agreement.*

When the Niskamoon Corporation inherited the Cree Employment Agreement, the name "Technical Employment with Hydro Québec (TEHQ) Program" was officially given to the hiring initiative. Other administrative changes also took place with this notable transfer. Details on how this change ushered in different eras of the program can be found in the following section of this report.

03

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

3.1 PHASE I: BUILDING OF A PROGRAM (2002-2004)
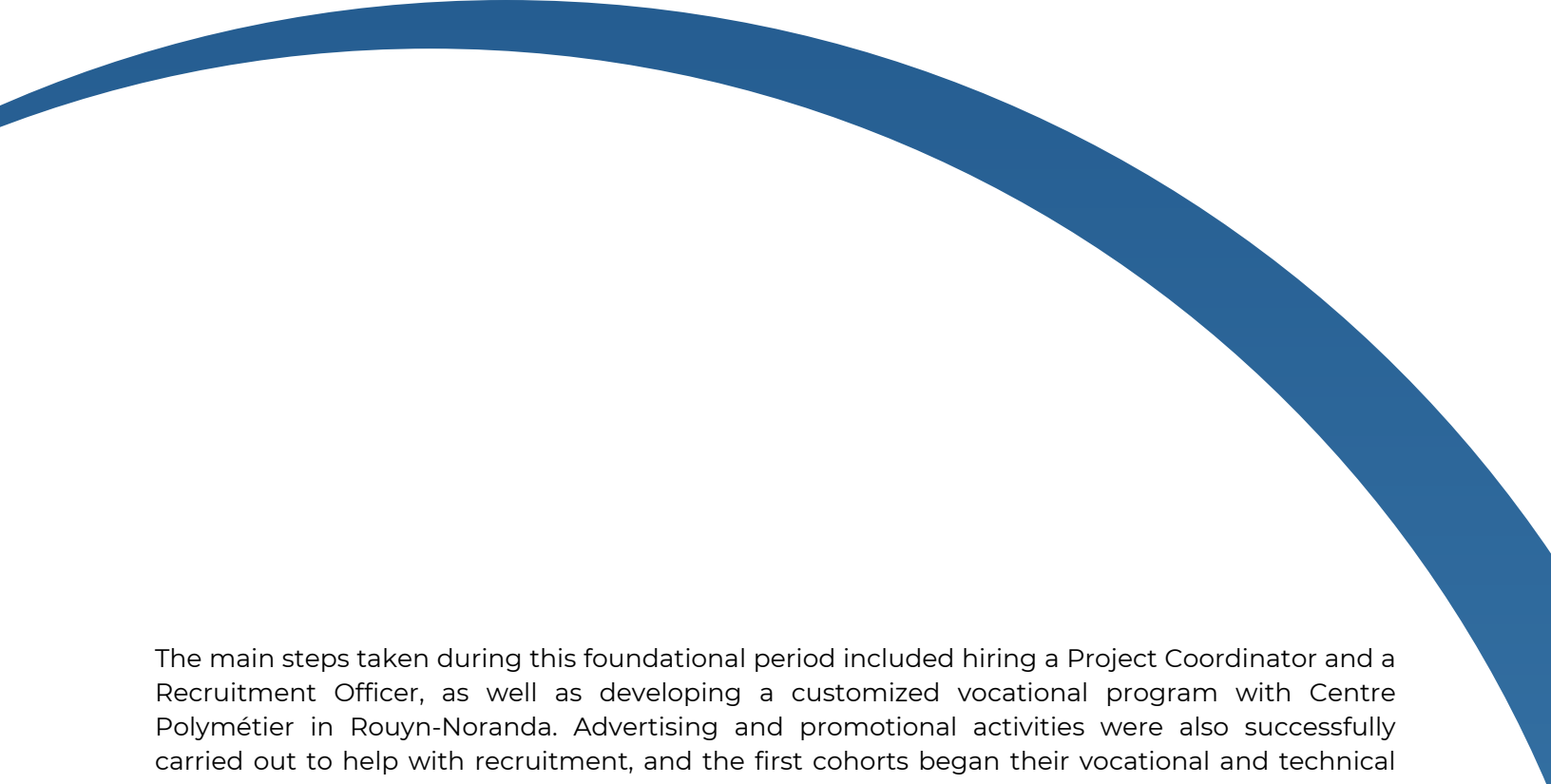
From the beginning, it was clear that fulfilling the terms of the Cree Employment Agreement would require a great deal of administration, program development, and collaboration. Cree stakeholders understood early on that prospective Cree Hydro-Québec workers had unique needs, and that a holistic approach would be required to respond to the cultural differences, language barriers, prerequisite disparities, and other challenges.

As previously mentioned, prior to the incorporation of the Niskamoon Corporation, the initial design, development and implementation of the training program was conducted under the authority, management, and administration of the Apatisiiwin Corporation. The Cree School Board collaborated a great deal with this corporation during this first phase, as was recommended in the agreement. A feasibility study by the consulting firm Econotec was also conducted prior to beginning work (in 2001), which provided some guidance in the first steps regarding administration. The report detailed the history of Cree training and employment at Hydro-Québec as well as looking into employment opportunities, potential training programs, estimated costs, and the availability of Cree applicants for Hydro-Québec jobs.

Regular meetings between the Apatisiiwin Corporation and the Cree School Board began on October 18, 2002, with the ambitious goal of welcoming the first students by the Fall of 2003. With less than a year to launch the program, there was a need to prioritize action items and determine roles quickly and without much forethought, which presented challenges.

During this time, the Apatisiiwin Corporation commissioned a second report from the consulting firm Econotec on the hiring initiative's budget planning and strategy. The second report offered a roadmap for the collaborators, refining the statistical analysis and outlining more specific recommendations on training paths, institutional partnerships, projected budgets, and more. This report, delivered in 2004, also provided important detail on the typical student profile based on the applications for the first two cohorts of the program, which was:
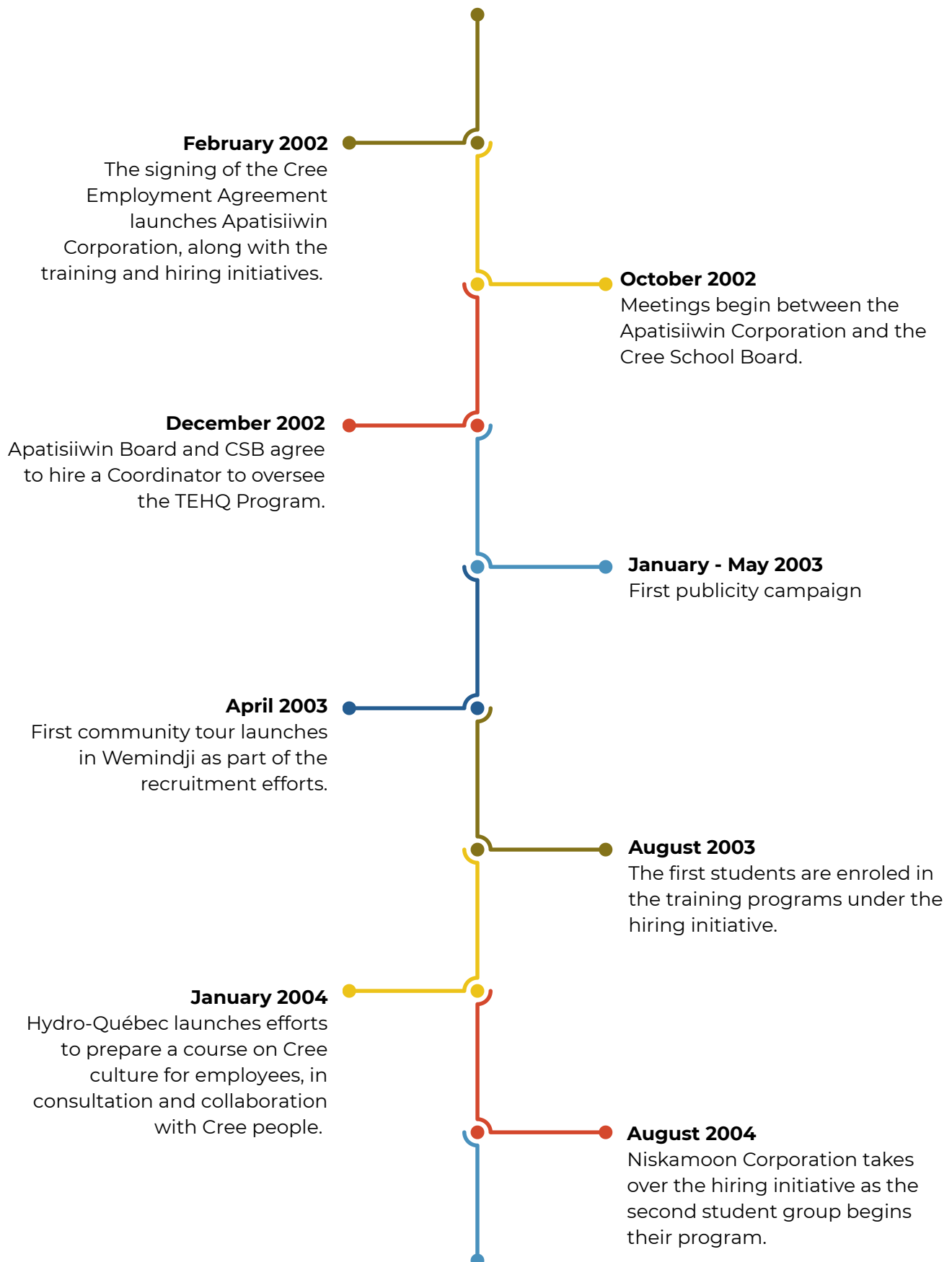
- *29 years old on average;*
- *had an average of 2.5 dependents;*
- *predominantly from Chisasibi, Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Waswanipi;*
- *few would come straight from high school; and*
- *few would have the necessary high school requirements.*

The main steps taken during this foundational period included hiring a Project Coordinator and a Recruitment Officer, as well as developing a customized vocational program with Centre Polymétier in Rouyn-Noranda. Advertising and promotional activities were also successfully carried out to help with recruitment, and the first cohorts began their vocational and technical studies in Rouyn-Noranda, Chibougamau, and Gatineau. Hydro-Québec also collaborated effectively with the Apatisiiwin Corporation Board during this time. They took concrete actions in response to feedback from Cree stakeholders, such as adjusting hiring tests for Cree candidates to prevent discrimination ($17,500 was invested by the Apatisiiwin Corporation to support this effort) and working to create a course on Cree culture for their employees.

During this phase, the team remained small, consisting of the Project Coordinator, the Recruitment/Administrative Officer, and a Student Animator. There was also some external support provided from service providers such as Econotec and Beesum Communications. The Apatisiiwin Board directed activities and made critical decisions during this short timeframe, making the quick launch of the first training cohort possible.

Overall, considering the many steps involved in launching this type of initiative, including program development, recruitment, partnership management and student support, it is remarkable that students were able to begin so quickly after the project's first meeting. In hindsight, nevertheless, more planning time would have been advisable. However, the dedication and great effort required to make significant strides in this short period deserve recognition. The foundational work carried out by the Apatisiiwin Corporation during this time undoubtedly ladi the groundwork for many of the successes that followed.

February 2002
The signing of the Cree Employment Agreement launches Apatisiiwin Corporation, along with the training and hiring initiatives.

October 2002
Meetings begin between the Apatisiiwin Corporation and the Cree School Board.

December 2002
Apatisiiwin Board and CSB agree to hire a Coordinator to oversee the TEHQ Program.

January - May 2003
First publicity campaign

April 2003
First community tour launches in Wemindji as part of the recruitment efforts.

August 2003
The first students are enroled in the training programs under the hiring initiative.

January 2004
Hydro-Québec launches efforts to prepare a course on Cree culture for employees, in consultation and collaboration with Cree people.

August 2004
Niskamoon Corporation takes over the hiring initiative as the second student group begins their program.

3.2 PHASE II: RAPID GROWTH (2005-2012)

In August 2004, the Niskamoon Agreement consolidated multiple projects and Corporations under one central body, known as the Niskamoon Corporation. As mentioned previously, the Apatisiiwin Corporation was thereby dissolved and the initiatives under the Cree Employment Agreement became the responsibility of the Niskamoon Corporation. This is also the first time these initiatives were referred to under the name we know today, the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) program.

In taking over the project, the Niskamoon Corporation had to build upon the foundation that was laid by the Apatisiiwin Corporation. They assumed the existing partnerships with the Cree School Board, training institutions, and Hydro-Québec. Notably, the role and responsibilities of the Cree School Board narrowed during this time, as the Niskamoon Corporation was given the authority to partner directly with academic institutions as well as directly employing team members under their purview (previously, the Cree School Board was responsible for hiring program employees).

Following a challenging transition period in 2004-2005, the Niskamoon Corporation decided to pause the program for the 2005-2006 academic year. During this hiatus, prospective students focused on completing prerequisite courses and improving their French language proficiency at the Centre Élisabeth-Bruyère in Rouyn-Noranda. Concurrently, the Niskamoon Corporation concentrated on refining its strategic direction and strengthening partnerships.

The Corporation's Board carefully examined the progress the Apatisiiwin Corporation had made in establishing the program and deliberated on the most effective path forward to support its continued development. This process led to the creation of a formal policy that defined the terms, conditions, and provisions of the TEHQ program. The policy also clearly outlined the program's objectives, which were as follows:

- *Offer Crees training programs that lead to the required qualifications in the respective disciplines of study.*

- *Provide training to Crees that leads them to meet HQ hiring requirements.*

- *Facilitate Cree enrolment in all targeted training programs.*

- *Support and encourage successful completion of training programs.*

- *Underline merit and recognize Niskamoon DEP and DEC level students who pursue success in their training programs.*

- *Foster student responsibility.*

Another important policy development established during this period was the extension of the "ten-year clause". Section 3.2.7 of the JBNQA, known as "the ten-year clause", stipulates that a Cree beneficiary who is "absent from the Territory for ten continuous years and is domiciled outside the Territory" is not entitled to JBNQA rights or benefits. This extended to sponsorship from the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services. However, TEHQ program organizers recognized the benefit of making the TEHQ program available to Cree people living outside the territory. To resolve this gap in funding, the Niskamoon Corporation provided equivalent sponsorship to students outside the ten-year clause for the first few years. By 2009 negotiations resulted in the CSB sponsoring TEHQ students affected by the ten-year clause. This allowed more Cree individuals to benefit from the TEHQ program and may have facilitated the return of skilled Cree people to Eeyou Istchee, enabling them to contribute economically to their home communities.

A final key development by the Niskamoon Corporation during this period was the establishment of a Training and Employment Committee. This committee was responsible for several important tasks, including the dissemination of information, supporting student readiness and training initiatives, such as French language instruction and preparation for summer employment assistance, and providing recommendations related to Hydro-Québec's employment practices. As the program evolved and the full scope of the administrative workload became increasingly clear, the organizers would go on to gradually expand the team and implement new processes to address unforeseen challenges and operational demands. In 2013, drawing on the lessons learned over the years, a comprehensive reorganization of the program's management structure was undertaken, marking the beginning of Phase 3.

August 2004
The Niskamoon Agreement establishes the Niskamoon Corporation, which takes over the management of the Cree Employment Agreement.

Summer of 2004
Decision is made to pause accepting candidates for the 2005-2006 academic year to focus on improving program management and prerequisites.

November 2005
The first draft of the Technical Employment at Hydro-Québec Policy is created.

January 2009
Partners come together for a Think Tank session to build alignment and strategize.

During 2010
Major enhancements to student support: the Niskamoon Student Centre opens, an Employment Advisor is hired, and Student Orientation Sessions are offered.

3.3 PHASE III: REORGANIZATION AND COMPLETION OF MANDATE (2013-2017)

By 2013, the end of the mandate was looming and there was a renewed urgency to maximize the impact of the TEHQ program in its final years. Program organizers had evolved past focusing on the goal of 150 Cree Hydro-Québec workers and were truly engaged with the wider capacity-building potential of the TEHQ program. The time was right to make the changes for a strong finish to the program: institutional partnerships had been established, and a decade of experience gave organizers valuable insight into what was and was not working.

As with any initiative of this magnitude, the program experienced continual growing pains as it scaled up. Over time, gaps and challenges became increasingly apparent, prompting the Niskamoon Board to reflect on the program's direction and consider a reorganization to ensure a successful conclusion. As a starting point, the Board commissioned a report from consultant Huguette Joly (commonly referred to as the Joly Report), which provided recommendations related to partnerships, human resources, and strategic planning, among other areas of concern. While it was not feasible to implement all of the recommended actions, several key ones were adopted in the final years of the TEHQ program, including the hiring of a new Regional Director.

In addition to this work, revisions were made to the TEHQ Policy during this time. The final version of the policy, which was passed in 2015, reorganized the General Provisions into the following easy-to-navigate categories:

- *Funding of Additional Measures in Vocational Training and Academic Programs*
- *Funding of French Language, Prerequisites and Summer Programs*
- *Support Measures (including incentives, sponsorships, childcare allowances, cultural leave, activity funds, and other "extras")*
- *Students Rights and Responsibilities (including entitlement, dismissal and readmission, harassment prohibition, information technology use and consent to use of name and picture)*

Rates and attendance policies were also included as annexes to the TEHQ Policy. This document serves as a useful reference for any future program or policy of a similar nature, as it reflects considerable effort and underwent multiple iterations before reaching its final format. The TEHQ Policy is included in Appendix B of this report.

In this final era, record numbers of students entered the final cohorts for the training programs, support measures were increasingly robust, and people had largely settled into their roles. In addition to the success of the main training programs, countless students benefited from enrichment opportunities that stemmed from the TEHQ, such as French immersion and prerequisite training (detailed in section 4.3 of this report), and CSB Math and Science initiatives (see section 5 of this report).

The holistic approach taken throughout the program, and particularly during Phase 3, helped to maximize the number of Cree people who benefited from initiatives that came out of the Cree Employment Agreement, supporting long-term capacity building in the Cree Nation.

Despite the continuation of some challenges, the TEHQ program was considered a success when it ended in 2017. According to Niskamoon reporting, 138 students graduated from TEHQ training programs. Of these, 122 were initially hired by Hydro-Québec, with 93 remaining in permanent positions as of September 30, 2019. The program's positive impacts extended well beyond these direct employment outcomes: improving the lives of numerous community members who earned prerequisites, accessed French immersion, and benefited from enhanced STEM education opportunities in school as a result of TEHQ initiatives.

February 2013
Reorganization begins following the submission of the Joly report with recommendations related to Human Resources, partnerships and strategic planning.

September 2015
The final version of the TEHQ Policy is passed.

September 2015
Final cohort of students begin (only 2-year programs).

June 2017
Last cohort graduates, marking a successful end to the Cree Employment Agreement mandate.

04

ANALYSIS

4.1 DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

For many decades, there had been a clear desire for more Cree workers to be hired by Hydro-Québec. From the Cree perspective, more jobs held by Cree workers would lead to a stronger economy for the Cree Nation, as well as stronger diplomatic relationships between the Cree communities and external governments and companies. Hydro-Québec jobs were stable, well-paying, year-round jobs that were already located on the territory, making them highly attractive to Cree people. The potential ripple effects of greater Cree employment in these roles were well understood, e.g. workers would reinvest their earnings into the local economy, reduce unemployment rates, act as role models to Cree youth, and overall contribute to a more economically self-sufficient Cree Nation. For its part, Hydro-Québec understood that hiring more Cree workers would improve its community relations and reputation, especially within Eeyou Istchee. They also had important obligations to fulfill under the JBNQA.

Despite the strong desire on both sides to hire and retain more Cree workers for Hydro-Québec jobs, there was very little Cree participation in the Hydro-Québec workforce prior to the establishment of the TEHQ program. According to Econotec's 2001 feasibility report, Cree people held only 16 permanent Hydro-Québec jobs on the territory. Lack of technical qualifications, French language proficiency, and cultural barriers were among the main reasons. Vacant positions and a shared desire to include Cree employees was not enough; applicants needed to have the right qualifications, and the systems that hired and integrated employees needed to be sensitive to cultural realities. In many ways, the culture within Hydro-Québec needed to shift to make space for Cree employees, and applicants needed to be prepared for the realities of the workplace they were trying to enter to be successful. The goal of the TEHQ program was to address these issues head-on, giving Cree people the opportunity to train for Hydro-Québec jobs and affirming that concrete action would be taken to help them integrate into the workforce.

Overall, the TEHQ program was rooted in a desire to create opportunities for Cree workers and to positively impact the relationship between Hydro-Québec and the Cree Nation by helping Cree people train for, obtain, and retain skilled jobs. Many Cree leaders recognized that Hydro-Québec would be present in Eeyou Istchee for many generations to come, and that maximizing economic benefits from their presence simply makes sense from a Cree perspective. Strengthened relations would also yield more positive outcomes for Hydro-Québec. Thus, while the official benchmark stipulated in the agreements was to achieve 150 permanent positions for Cree people, this underlying objective ultimately guided the vision for success throughout the program.

According to the TEHQ Policy, the specific objectives of the TEHQ program were to:

- *Offer Crees training programs that lead to the required qualifications in said respective disciplines of study;*

- *Provide training to Crees that leads them to meet the Hydro-Québec hiring requirements;*

- *Facilitate Cree enrolment in all targeted training programs;*

- *Support and encourage successful completion of training programs;*

- *Underline merit and recognize Niskamoon DEP and DEC level students who pursue success in their training programs;*

- *Foster individual responsibility; and*

- *Further support the measures aimed at providing Hydro-Québec a minimum of 150 qualified Cree people to work in the James Bay Area.*

These objectives illustrate the large scope of the task before administrators. They needed to go beyond simply organizing training programs, doing all they could to support student retention, foster individual responsibility, underline merit amongst Cree students, and support workplace integration. This holistic approach to success greatly benefited the students, but the effort needed to succeed in meeting these objectives was, at times, underestimated.

The following sections of this report detail the work involved, including both successes and lessons learned, so future initiatives can build upon this critical foundation.

4.2 RECRUITMENT

4.2.1 Approach

As previously mentioned, student recruitment for the training programs under the TEHQ program was a collaborative effort involving the Niskamoon Corporation, the Cree School Board, Hydro-Québec, and educational institutions. Specifically, recruitment campaigns typically took place in January and February each year, with applications due by March 1st. Yearly recruitment campaigns varied slightly, but generally consisted of the following:

- **Community tours** (2003-2012): The first tour began in Wemindji in April 2003. Over the following years the tour included visiting all the Cree communities, as well as Montreal, Val-d'Or, Eastmain-1 work camp and Gatineau. In-school presentations during the day and public presentations in the evening were typically organized. The presentations included a promotional video and a Q&A session with representatives from Niskamoon, CSB, and Hydro-Québec.

- **Radio announcements**: Spots ran on both local and regional stations in the territory.

- **Posters and promotional materials**: Niskamoon Local Coordinators and school Guidance Counsellors were supplied with promotional materials and application forms for potential students. Posters were strategically placed around the communities and in appropriate locations, such as the CSB post-secondary student lounges. Promotional printed materials were also widely available. In fact, the program brochure was the first means of advertising for the TEHQ program; brochures were sent to all Cree households in the territory.

- **Media campaigns**: These included social media posts, advertisements in *The Nation*, the CTA magazine, the Chisasibi local newsletter *Waaskimaashtauu*, and in the AirCreebec *Destinations*, and radio interviews on *CBC North*, the James Bay Cree Communications Society (*JBCCS*), and the local Chisasibi radio station.

- **Career fairs and an information session**: In addition to having a booth at local and regional career fairs throughout the program, an in-person information session was held in Rouyn-Noranda in January 2014. The session was attended by CSB high school, post-secondary and Sabtuan guidance counsellors and educational consultants, student affairs technicians, and Niskamoon Local Coordinators. The event included presentations, meeting the students and tours of the Student Centre, and the school. This helped promote more individualized, local outreach to potential candidates, as the pool of possible students had diminished considerably by 2013.

The following creative assets were developed to support recruitment efforts:

- A landing page on the Niskamoon's website
- Promotional video (Open Doors to the Future)
- Videos of events (e.g. Dinner of Chiefs)
- Print and radio advertisements
- Posters, cards, and brochures

- PowerPoint presentations
- Promotional giveaways
- Applications booklets
- Social media posts
- Banner displays

Messaging for the recruitment campaign evolved alongside the program.

2003-2007	2008-2012	2013-2015
The initiative was new, focusing on raising awareness and promoting training programs and job opportunities.	The focus shifted to highlighting student success through testimonials, photos, and graduate recognition, while also promoting new support programs.	With time running out, "Last Chance!" messaging created urgency. More focussed advertising efforts helped engage new prospects.

Overall, recruitment efforts were successful for the TEHQ program. From the outset, recruitment was a well-staffed area. The combination of strong collaborations and a multi-faceted communication strategy greatly contributed to a positive outcome.

4.2.2 Partners

The CSB played a key role in the recruitment, actively taking part in the community tours, school coordination, and informing students about funding incentives. Hydro-Québec also was active participant in the community tours, highlighting potential career paths after the training.

Media outlets like The Nation, CBC-North, and the JBCCS were vital for outreach, with strong media relationships and coverage key to promotional success.

4.2.3 Outcomes and Statistics

A total of 732 Crees applied to the TEHQ training programs between 2004 and 2016, and 220 ultimately enroled in one of the four DVS or DCS programs. For context, the labour pool in Eeyou Istchee at the time was 9,245 people[4], which means that 7.7% of the Cree labour market applied to the programs and 2.3% ultimately enroled.

This is a very respectable figure, especially considering the program was limited to four programs targeting two trades, which were selected on the basis of Hydro-Québec's employment needs, rather than through any analysis of candidate interests or educational background. In fact, only 0.89% of the Quebec labour pool pursued any electrician and equipment mechanics training program or apprenticeship over a similar 15-year period, compared to 2.38% of Crees who enroled in the TEHQ programs alone. This figure was reached despite Cree candidates facing unique challenges related to program location, language, prerequisites, and cultural integration.

TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE ENROLMENT RATES IN TECHNICAL TRAINING: TEHQ PROGRAM VS QUEBEC WORKFORCE IN THE ELECTRICIAN AND MECHANIC TRADES

	Total Registrations	Labour Pool	%
All Related Programs & Apprenticeships in Quebec, 2008-2022 (15-year period)	38,904[5]	4,395,00[6]	0.89%
Electrician + Electronics and Instrumentation	36,651 (31,845 Electrician + 4,806 E&I)	4,395,000	0.83%
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics	2,253	4,395,000	0.05%
TEHQ Program, 2003-2017 (15-year period)	220	9,245	2.38%
Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (DVS/DEP)	145	9,245	1.57%
Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (DVS/DEP)	50	9,245	0.54%
Industrial Electronics in Instrumentation and Automation (DVS/DEC)	20	9,245	0.22%
Electronics Technology in Telecommunications/Computers (DCS/DEC)	5	9,245	0.05%

[4] Based on Labour Force data for Eeyou Istchee. Cree Labour Market Survey, Cree Human Resources Development, March 2008. https://acee-ceaa.gc.ca/5D97CA58-docs/statistical_profile_2008-eng.pdf

[5] Canadian Apprenticeship Registrations and Certifications, Registered Apprentice Information System (RAIS), Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2020016-eng.htm

[6] Based on Labour Force data for all of Quebec. Labour Force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted, Statistics Canada. Table: 14-10-0287-03.

4.2.4 Recommendations: Recruitment

1 **Adjust recruitment efforts to reflect the targeted audience's knowledge of the program:** The TEHQ recruitment strategy is a great example of a communications strategy that successfully evolved over time in response to what people were seeing on the ground. When the program was brand new, information sharing was of prime importance in the recruitment strategy. As people became more aware of the program, the emphasis shifted to marketing the program's selling points and creating urgency around deadlines. Adjustments were made based on the realities of the target audience, leading to a successful campaign year after year.

2 **Clear student profiles and information sharing can help target the ideal candidates:** Arguably, having fewer applicants who are a better fit is preferable to managing a large number who ultimately are not suited to the program. It is important for recruitment teams to have a strong understanding of who they are trying to recruit. Depending on the program, there could be very specific considerations (for example, colour blindness may make someone ineligible for jobs working with colour-coded wires). Recruiters should have clear student profiles, and it is ideal for prospective students to be told what the entry requirements are from the start. A one-on-one consultation with prospective students could help them decide to apply or not.

3 **From the outset, make French language expectations clear:** One of the main barriers to retention in the training programs and the workplace were difficulties with French proficiency. If a candidate is not proficient in French, then it is important to assess their capacity and commitment to either learning the language or improving on existing skills. It is crucial that potential applicants clearly understand the need to work in French before applying to this type of training program.

4 **Centre student voices and stories:** Highlighting student voices and stories can significantly enhance recruitment efforts. For example, the inclusion of Cree Hydro-Québec worker Lesley Mattawashish in the 2008-2009 campaign was well-received by applicants. Students connected with his story and appreciated the opportunity to ask him questions. Similar efforts included adding photos of Cree students 'in action' to promotional materials and the publishing of the list of graduates to make the program journey feel relatable and achievable. This tactic would benefit future promotional efforts for similar projects.

5 **Dedicated support and investment can result in success:** Recruitment was one area that was well-understood and prioritized from the beginning, with a Recruitment Officer being one of the first positions hired under the original Apatisiiwin Corporation. Given the overall success of the campaigns, it is clear that having dedicated support for recruitment worked well. Recruitment is also an area where all partners seemed to collaborate well and understand the goals at hand, which contributed greatly to the overall success. If team members had been provided with regularly updated student profiles, as previously mentioned, it likely would have further enhanced recruitment outcomes.

6 **Ensure year-round access to current information for guidance counsellors and local representatives:** Typically students consider their next career and education steps throughout the year. Therefore, providing information and promotional materials on an ongoing basis in order keep these opportunities fresh in the minds of guidance counsellors and local representatives can help garner students' interest in any possible future programs.

7 **Use recruitment as a tool to build partner alignment:** As part of the recruitment efforts, TEHQ program partners conducted outreach tours to the Cree communities as well as to some urban areas, where Cree students were already pursuing studies. These visits served to share information about the TEHQ program and connect directly with community members. These tours had the unintended benefit of bringing together TEHQ program partners, giving everyone a chance to work together and align their messaging. It became an opportunity to build relationships while simultaneously supporting recruitment goals.

4.3 PRE-ENROLMENT

The application deadline for the TEHQ training program was March 1st, with classes starting in the Fall. For most of the program's tenure, the application process was overseen by the Niskamoon staff and the CSB recruitment officer. The process included:

- Reception and review of student applications
- Meeting with the institutions
- Managing admissibility replies from the institutions
- Reaching out to students who required upgrading or prerequisites

There were often many steps under each of these points, resulting in a tremendous administrative workload. To add to the complexity, most of the applicants did not have adequate secondary-level education and/or French fluency. As an example, in 2004, only 38 of the 128 applicants (30%) were admitted due to lack of qualifications.

In response, the Niskamoon team, together with their partners, had to quickly build programs that would help Cree applicants attain the qualifications they needed to take advantage of the TEHQ program. The recruitment officer and the Niskamoon team helped students navigate the support infrastructure by directing applicants to the right pre-enrolment program for their needs, answering questions, interfacing with partner institutions, and managing challenges on a case-by-case basis.

This student-centric approach greatly benefited the people attending the training programs. However, it was very work-intensive and challenging, especially as annual deadlines neared. Having human resources and pre-enrolment programs in place to support applicants who were missing certain qualifications was essential to the success of the TEHQ program, and the support prospective students needed to become qualified and prepared for training programs should not be underestimated.

4.3.1 Programs and Partners

Several pre-enrolment programs were put into place to respond to the large number of Cree student prospects who needed to improve their secondary-level education and/or French fluency in order to pursue the necessary training programs. Not only were these programs successful in preparing students for their studies and subsequent Hydro-Québec jobs, but they greatly increased the capacity building footprint of the TEHQ program overall by giving people a chance to upgrade their skills in a supportive environment built with them in mind.

French Immersion Program
Partners: Centre Linguistique du College de Jonquiere and Centre Élisabeth-Bruyère

Initially, the French Immersion program consisted of a two-week summer session in St. Hyacinthe, where students lived with French-speaking families and followed an intensive curriculum. When this shorter program was found to be not enough to fully prepare students for a French work environment, the Niskamoon Corporation and the Cree School Board entered into a service agreement with Centre Linguistique du CÉGEP de Jonquière to create a six-week program. From there, it evolved into a full-year program, which included five months of intensive immersion in Jonquiere (September to January), followed by continued French upgrading at Centre Elisabeth Bruyere in Rouyn-Noranda.

Prerequisite Training Program
Partners: Cree School Board and Centre Élisabeth-Bruyère

In 2005, the Cree School Board and the Niskamoon Corporation entered into a service agreement with Centre Élisabeth Bruyère to provide academic upgrading. Candidates who would be able to meet TEHQ program requirements within one year of studies had access to this program. Since the prerequisite courses were taught in French, this program also helped candidates to improve their French proficiency and acclimate to attending school outside of the communities.

Niskamoon's TEHQ Orientation Program
Partners: Hydro-Québec, Cree School Board, Pour Parler, and educational institutions

Starting in 2009, students were invited to participate in a two-week orientation session in August. It took place in Cantley, Quebec, about 30 minutes north of Gatineau, at the Econiche House. The purpose of this program was to introduce the TEHQ program, its requirements, the student responsibilities, Hydro-Québec's work environment, and expectations. It also included intercultural sensitivity training, a self-awareness session, French evaluations, communication activities and workshops on learning and workplace strategies.

Representatives from the Niskamoon Corporation, the Cree School Board, Hydro-Québec, Centre Polymétier, Centre Elizabeth Bruyère, and Centre Harricana all typically gave presentations regarding their roles and responsibilities in the TEHQ program, and often there were Hydro-Québec Cree employees who also came to speak with the students. The orientation was considered part of the psychosocial support measures for the TEHQ program and had many positive outcomes in that regard, including building core skills, introducing peers to one another, and providing a chance to assess important students' success factors like French fluency, competencies, commitment, team building potential, and overall employee portfolio.

4.3.2 Experience

Getting ready for their educational and career journey.
From the moment they chose to apply, prospective TEHQ students often had questions about their individual circumstances. Common areas of concern included admission requirements, financial support, and the logistics of relocating to the training site — often accompanied by partners and children. To further complicate matters, as mentioned previously, most students lacked the academic prerequisites and/or French competency needed to pursue the programs, which were delivered entirely in French (except for one DEC program offered in English at CÉGEP Heritage College for a single cohort). For the few who did have the academic qualifications, the question of socio-cultural readiness for the programs of study and subsequent jobs was ever-present. It was important for these students to have a point of contact to direct their questions and concerns, and for the administration to have the capacity to respond to inquiries and connect students with the right preparatory programs if needed. The orientation sessions, which ran from 2009 to 2015, provided even more support to students by helping them better understand what to expect in their training, and subsequent jobs.

Preparing to learn and work in French.
Learning a language can be immensely challenging, especially considering the level of proficiency needed to be successful in a Hydro-Québec team. In addition to learning French, students needed to understand the Québecois colloquialisms and cultural norms of this unique workplace, and to build the confidence to express themselves and collaborate with colleagues in French.

At first, TEHQ program administrators underestimated the amount of time and effort needed to reach this level of proficiency (as mentioned, the initial French immersion program was only two weeks in length). In addition to needing more time, program organizers also found that the in-class learning did not necessarily teach the cultural or working language skills required to be successful in a trades program or Hydro-Québec job. Students also still socialized primarily in Cree and English, which made a full immersion experience difficult to achieve.

Overall, although improvements were made as the year progressed and some students were successful in later versions of the immersion, French proficiency remained one of the biggest hurdles to success in the TEHQ program.

Earning prerequisites at Centre Elisabeth Bruyère.
Many applicants were missing academic prerequisites and needed to be redirected to preparatory programs. The flexibility of the Cree Employment Agreement allowed for the development of the Prerequisite Training program, which benefited 92 Cree beneficiaries. This gave prospective students the unique opportunity to earn credits, primarily in math and science(s), in a French learning environment, which helped to prepare them for further studies and work at Hydro-Québec.

This preparatory stream proved to be essential to the TEHQ program's success. Not only did it give 36 additional students an opportunity to attend the training programs, but it gave all 92 Cree students access to academic upgrading that would improve their education and career prospects long-term.

Moving South and preparing for student life.
Despite the fact they were preparing for jobs in Eeyou Istchee, TEHQ training programs required students to move "down South" (a common term used for cities located to the south of Eeyou Istchee). From family considerations to finding housing to simply the stress of moving somewhere new, much of the support students needed was related to moving to the program location. TEHQ program administrators put several measures in place to respond to this, including providing student orientations, planning social activities, and having staff onsite to support them specifically. These measures were well received and helped many students. However, the reality was that managing the challenges of moving somewhere new (finding housing, social integration for families, mental health concerns, etc.) often made it difficult for people to focus on academic and professional preparation.

In sum, many of the support mechanisms implemented by the Rouyn-Noranda office were developed to address needs already identified in the 2004 Econotec report, specifically targeting the typical TEHQ student profile, which over time did not evolve significantly.

These were:

- Prerequisite training to bring students up to the level required to enter the program and to be successful.
- French-language training for candidates with insufficient levels of French to either study in the language or, more importantly, to work at Hydro-Québec.
- Support for moving expenses from the students' home communities to Rouyn-Noranda.
- Facilitating finding accommodation within Rouyn-Noranda for small families.
- Creating a strong social network among the students, families and support staff that replicates in part family networks that exist for most students at home.

Adapting the program to address these needs was key to the new student-centric approach adopted by the Niskamoon Corporation. They understood that sustained efforts were needed to ensure Cree TEHQ students received the support required to balance their academic and family responsibilities, particularly with the need to move to a new environment for training.

4.3.3 Outcomes and Statistics

Throughout the TEHQ program, a total of 732 applications were received, resulting in the admission of 398 students. While the high number of applicants demonstrates the strength of recruitment efforts in the TEHQ program, analyzing and managing so many student files was often administratively taxing, especially with the added task of orienting candidates to prerequisite upgrading and French immersion programs where possible. This spread between applicants and admitted students is certainly worth noting for organizers of future programs, demonstrating the need for robust systems and staffing at the application review stage.

FIGURE 1: TEHQ TRAINING PROGRAM APPLICANTS VS ADMITTED STUDENTS (2004-2017)
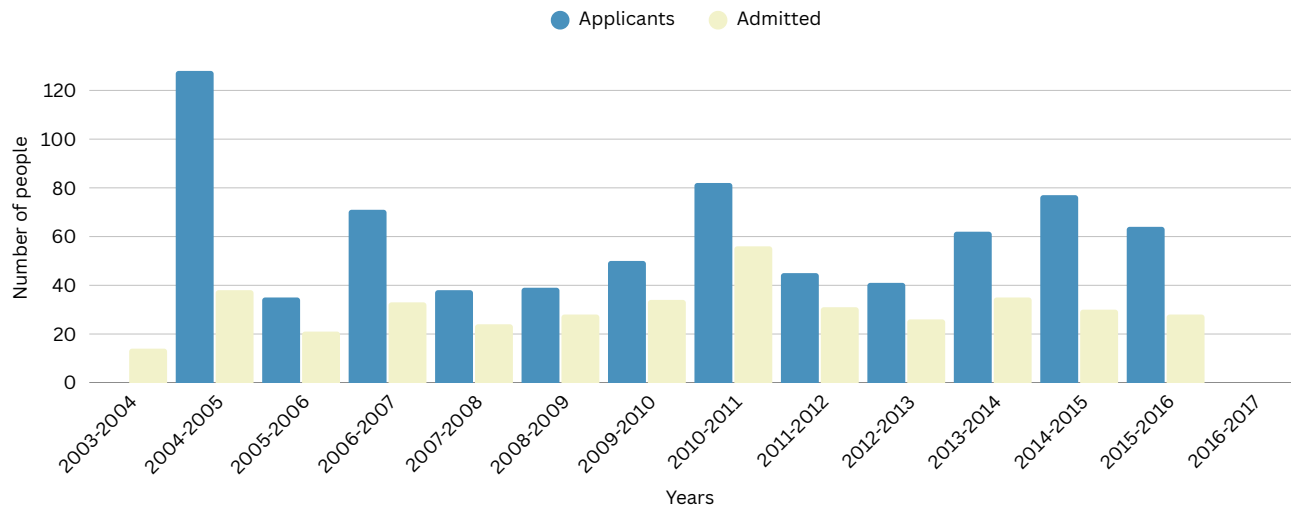
Many of those admitted benefitted greatly from the French Immersion and Prerequisite Training Programs. Not only were dozens of people able to graduate from TEHQ programs thanks to these programs, but many more gained valuable skills and credentials that they could use to better their circumstance, whichever path they chose.

French Immersion Training Program
- 41 Cree beneficiaries enroled
- 11 went on to graduate from TEHQ programs (27% conversion rate)

Prerequisite Training Program
- 92 Cree beneficiaries enroled
- 36 went on to graduate from TEHQ programs (39% conversion rate)

Source: Overview of the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec Program, Andrea Kitchen (2017)

4.3.4 Financial Data

Refer to Section 4.4.6 for an analysis of pre-enrolment measures.

4.3.5 Recommendations: Pre-enrolment

8   **Education levels must be a key consideration in program design:** Many interested applicants lacked a Secondary School Diploma, making prerequisites a major barrier in the TEHQ program. Partnerships with the Cree School Board and Centre Élisabeth-Bruyère were key to addressing this issue. Future programs of this nature should assess students' existing education levels and provide clear upgrading pathways, especially for subjects like math and science, which are often inaccessible in some communities.

9   **Procedures and policies provide the necessary framework for administrative success:** The TEHQ administrative team was met with a wide range of questions and challenges from students, often needing to deal with them on a case-by-case basis. Early on, a lack of clear policies and procedures made it difficult to respond to these individual cases effectively and efficiently. Based on this experience, it is recommended that a similar program create policies that address common scenarios and clarity about roles and responsibilities in advance of the first cohort.

10   **Experts in adult learning can strengthen French immersion design:** Language learning in adulthood can take a lot of time and effort. Thankfully, there are experts who can help establish effective language learning programs. The TEHQ program experience demonstrates the importance of involving language learning experts from the beginning, to build a program that fully addresses the students' language needs.

11   **Learning Québecois cultural norms for successful workplace integration:** Cultural and language barriers posed major challenges for students. Hydro-Québec can be a tight-knit, culturally homogenous environment, and most of the non-Cree workers had little experience working with Indigenous peoples. For Cree trainees, it was vital to go beyond textbook French, and learn more about the expectations, and culture at Hydro-Québec. Orientation, intercultural training, and immersive experiences like home-stays helped trainees build practical language and cultural skills. Crucially, preparation must go both ways: employers also need support to understand and respect Cree culture.

4.4 TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

The formal technical training programs were at the heart of the TEHQ program. As discussed in previous sections, program organizers worked diligently to lay the groundwork for success in these programs, from information-sharing during recruitment to academic preparation in pre-enrolment programs. Once enroled, ongoing support from the Niskamoon Corporation, the Cree School Board, and training institutions would prove to be essential.

4.4.1 Programs and Partners

Two vocational programs (DEP programs) and two technical programs (DEC programs) were selected for the TEHQ trainees. These programs were:

Hydro-Québec Jobs	Vocational Programs (2 years of study)	Entrance Requirements
Apparatus Electricians **(Électricien d'appareillage)**	Diplôme d'études professionnelles (DEP) / Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS): Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics Automated Systems Electromechanics or DEP: Maintenance Electricity	1. Completed Secondary 4 <u>or</u> be 18 years old and pass a General Development Test and/or High School Equivalency Test 2. Mandatory French Immersion Course or fluency in French
Apparatus Mechanics **(Mécanicien d'appareillage)**	DEP: Industrial Construction Maintenance Mechanics or DEP: Industrial Mechanics	

Hydro-Québec Jobs	Technical Programs (3 years of Study)	Entrance Requirements
Automation Electricians **(Technicien en automatisme)**	Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC) / Diploma of College Studies (DCS): Industrial Electronic Technology or DEC: Instrumentation and Automation Technology	1. Have a High School Diploma or vocational DEP with the following: 2. Math 436 3. Physical Science 436 4. Mandatory French Immersion Course or fluency in French
Telecommunications Technicians **(Technicien en télécommunication)**	Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC) / Diploma of College Studies (DCS): Electronics Technology in Telecommunications / Computers	

These programs were selected based purely on numerical considerations on the employer side: specifically, the total count of existing positions in each job category at Hydro-Québec (supporting the goal of hiring 150 trainees) and long-term projections indicating these positions would still exist throughout the 15-year agreement period. Student interests and actual vacancies at Hydro-Québec were not considered in selecting the programs, which may have impacted outcomes both in terms of recruitment and integration. Further analysis of this is detailed in the "Recommendations" listed in section 4.4.7.

For a list of all the partners that worked with the Apatisiiwin/Niskamoon Corporations, refer to Appendix A.

4.4.2 Student Profile

As perviously noted in this report, the 2004 Econotec study identified the typical TEHQ student profile as having the following characteristics:

- 29 years old on average

- Had 2.5 dependents on average

- Predominantly from Chisasibi, Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Waswanipi

- Few would come straight from high school

- Few would have the necessary high school requirements

This projected profile generally held to be correct, with 2009 data indicating that the average student was aged between 26 and 35. Chisasibi, Mistissini, Waskaganish, and Waswanipi were indeed the main communities of origin, although it is worth noting that some Band members who participated lived outside the territory at the time of their enrolment (as the exception to the ten-year clause increased the number of students). For example, several Waskaganish Band Members from Pikogan enroled in the program. Additionally, as the years progressed, the student profile evolved; for example, later years saw more women enroling in the training programs. Our recommendations note the importance of maintaining and updating a Student Profile in order to properly target recruitment, predatory programs, and student support activities.

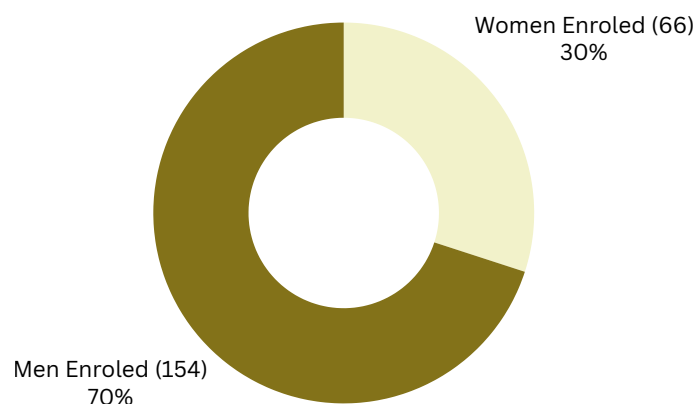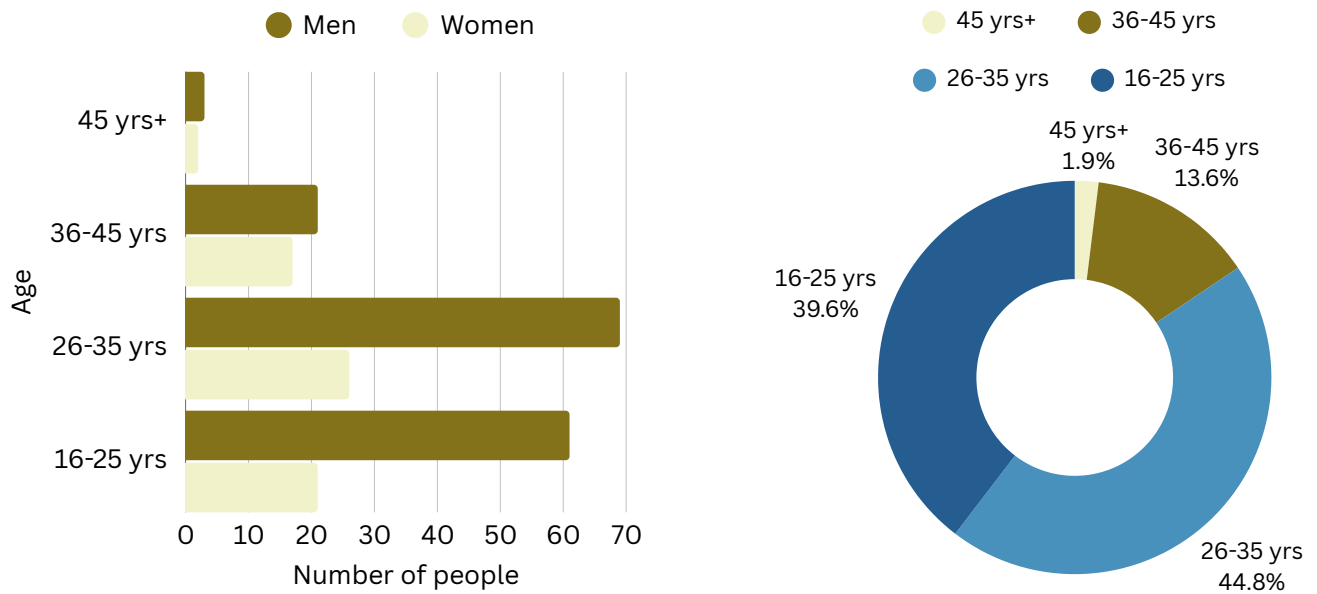**FIGURE 2: ENROLMENT IN THE TEHQ PROGRAM BY GENDER**

Women Enroled (66) 30%

Men Enroled (154) 70%

FIGURE 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TEHQ PROGRAM CANDIDATES

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF TEHQ PROGRAM CANDIDATES (WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN)

Marital status, with/without children	Men	Women	Total
Single, without children	67	14	81
Single, with children	9	20	29
Married/partnered, without children	6	5	11
Married/partnered, with children	72	27	99
TOTAL	154	66	220

TABLE 4: PREVIOUS DIPLOMAS HELD BY TEHQ PROGRAM CANDIDATES

Type of Diploma	Men	Women	Total
No diploma, with general development test	101	30	131
HSD	42	26	68
DVS	10	2	12
DCS	1	5	6
University certificate	1	1	2
Bachelor's degree	0	1	1
TOTAL	**155**	**65**	**220**

TABLE 5: TEHQ PROGRAM CANDIDATES' HOME COMMUNITIES

Home Community	Men	Women	Total
Eastmain	1	0	1
Chisasibi	38	14	52
Mistissini	21	8	29
Nemaska	7	2	9
Oujé-Bougoumou	1	0	1
Waskaganish	43	26	69
Waswanipi	40	16	56
Wemindji	2	0	2
Whapmagoostui	0	0	0
Outside of Quebec	1	0	1
TOTAL	**154**	**66**	**220**

One of the notable successes highlighted by this data is the significant number of women who enroled in TEHQ programs. Women represented 30% of TEHQ program candidates, despite the fact that early feasibility reports indicated the programs selected for TEHQ program did not align with the interest of most women in the communities.

According to reporting from the Niskamoon Corporation, women had several reasons for enroling in TEHQ programs. These motivations included the desire to escape a difficult situation, being a role model for their children, and/or staying with a partner and keep the family together. Although each woman's story was different, each saw the program as a way to better her life and/or the lives of her family.

Overall, enrolment figures for women in the TEHQ program exceeded expectations. Women were drawn to the opportunities it offered, even though the trades offered did not always align with their personal interests. Future initiatives could achieve even greater female participation by incorporating more diverse program options that align with a broader range of career interests.

4.4.3 Experience

Selecting a program.
When prospective students selected a program, prerequisites and personal interests were often the main considerations. The location of the program also played a major factor, with many students being attracted to Rouyn-Noranda due to the increased amount of support for Cree students in the area and the fact that many had already completed prerequisites locally. This led to Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (which was offered in Rouyn-Noranda with a Secondary 4 prerequisite) being the most popular program, followed by Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (offered in Chibougamau and Amos). For a full detail on student enrolment trends, see 4.5.5., Outcomes and Statistics.

Moving to their location of study.
Students who had enroled in the French immersion or prerequisite programs would have moved to their training location prior to enrolment in a TEHQ training program, which may have eased their transition. Those who did not require one of these programs, however, needed to relocate prior to beginning school. As with the pre-enrolment program, this presented a range of challenges related to lodging, childcare, homesickness, and beyond. Student support measures were organized to help make the move easier, which made a significant positive difference for many students.

Persevering to graduation.
After moving to attend their training program, the hard work of completing it began. Measures like financial assistance, cultural leave, and activities organized by the Niskamoon Student Support Centre made a significant positive impact in student retention, minimizing stressors and helping students feel more at home in their new environment. The role of family and peers also cannot be underestimated, and many students leaned on their personal support systems as they navigated this new challenge. In total, more than half of the students enroled in the TEHQ program succeeded in completing their program of studies, with 138 students (out of 220 enroled in one of the four training programs) graduating by the end of the last cohort.

4.4.4 Student Support Measures

Student Financial Assistance Program
The CSB supports Cree post-secondary students via its existing programs and policies, which also benefited TEHQ students (in later years the ten-year clause was waived for those from outside the territory). The Niskamoon Corporation provided the following supplementary financial assistance with additional measures to encourage enrolment and retention.
- Monthly living allowances are based on their family unit
- Moving expenses, travel expenses, lodging allowances, and other related expenses
- Financial Incentives for successful semester, amounts varied by program
- Social activities and outings
- A laptop
- A TEHQ jacket

Financial assistance was also provided to students who were enroled in the prerequisites training program and French Immersion, which was critical in making the programs available to a larger segment of the Cree population.

Cultural Break
Although the programs were taught outside the communities, Cree cultural breaks were included in the agreements with most of the post-secondary institutions. This allowed the students to enjoy a one-week cultural break in the fall or spring, which helped with their well-being.

Student Support Centre & Support Staff
The Niskamoon Corporation operated a unique drop-in centre in Rouyn-Noranda to support students. Through the Centre, Students could access social activities, counselling, computers, French courses, and more. At the height of its operations during Phase 3, the team at the Rouyn-Noranda Centre included:
- A Training and Employment Director
- A Coordinator of Student Support Measures
- A Student Life Animator
- An Employment Skills and Competencies Development Counsellor
- An Office Clerk Student Services

Another Student Animator was also present in Amos to support students. Communications support was provided by the Niskamoon Communications Officer. Psycho-social professionals such as workers, psychologists, and life coaches were also made available to students through the Centre.

Overall, these team members and the services they provided played a vital role in the students' success. Their academic, social, and emotional support had a meaningful impact.

Summer Employment Program
The Niskamoon Corporation subsidized employers who employed students from the TEHQ program over the summer months. Employers were subsidized up to a maximum of $560 per week (later increased to $595 per week) for up to 12 weeks. To receive the full amount, employers had to submit a weekly timesheet verifying that the student had worked full-time (35 hours).

Several students took advantage of the program each year, which provided them with valuable experience as well as financial support. Finding summer jobs in the students' respective fields of study was the biggest challenge for the students, and only a few worked at jobs relevant to their studies. Nevertheless, it was a valuable program that helped provide stability and maintain a positive trajectory for students.

Guarantees for Housing

Niskamoon supported students by providing landlords with a rent payment guarantee, helping students secure housing prior to moving. This support aim was to give students peace of mind, making it easier for them to leave their home communities to pursue their studies.

Priority Childcare Services

Over half of TEHQ students were parents, making childcare a major concern for many of those who had young children. Like many parts of Quebec at this time, Rouyn-Noranda faced a shortage of childcare spots, and responding to this challenge demanded considerable time and resources from student services staff.

In response, the Niskamoon Corporation, with support from the Cree Regional Authority's (now Cree Nation Government) Child and Family Services Department (now Miyuuhpichinaausuwin Apatisiiwin), worked to secure priority childcare services for students. Additionally, a representative from CPE la Ribanbelle visited Waskaganish to gain a deeper understanding of Cree culture and the specific needs of Cree children.

Other solutions were also pursued, with Niskamoon even purchasing a building with the intention of opening their own childcare facility[7]. While this did not ultimately come to fruition, the fact that they were seriously considered shows that the Niskamoon Corporation understood and prioritized the challenge presented by childcare shortages. Ultimately, they were able to find placements for all of the young children, allowing their parents to successfully pursue the program.

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[7] Specifically, Niskamoon Corporation purchased a house on Murdoch Avenue in 2007 with the intention of turning it into a childcare centre. However, by 2009, the house proved unsuitable due to necessary renovations, including replacing a water heater and two exterior walls with asbestos. The estimated $600,000 cost of these renovations, even with some Quebec government funding and a partnership with CPE la Ribanbelle, was simply too costly. Faced with these challenges, Niskamoon was urged to sell the house to CPE la Ribanbelle at a lower price to cover renovation costs. Despite these efforts, the project was delayed, and by 2011, the project was officially abandoned.

4.4.5 Outcomes and Statistics

A total of 220 students were registered in training programs between 2003-2017. The distribution of these admissions showed considerable fluctuation in student numbers over this period. Such fluctuations are typical of training programs and may reflect a number of different factors, including availability of support services, French immersion and prerequisite opportunities, and individual student circumstances.

The program experienced a notable increase in enrolment during 2010-2011, corresponding with a period of significant challenges that culminated in efforts to increase strategic planning and restructure aspects of program administration and management. This rapid growth phase revealed that when programs scale up, previously minor issues often become magnified. Programs that successfully navigate such transitions typically anticipate these challenges in advance, building processes and policies that allow the program to maintain quality while accommodating increased volume. Many of the overall recommendations for the TEHQ program in section 7.3 relate to lessons learned during this period.

FIGURE 4: TRENDS IN THE TEHQ PROGRAM ADMISSIONS, ENROLMENTS, AND GRADUATION (2003-2020)
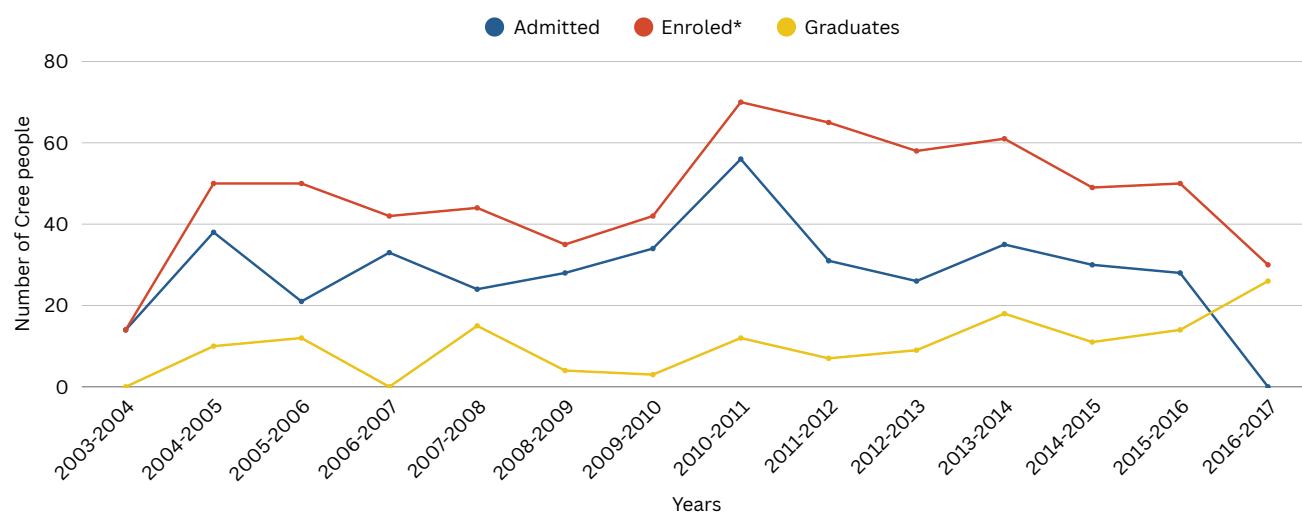
*Note that enroled numbers include returning students as well.

Of these trainees, 210 entered vocational-level (DVS/DEP) programs and 18 entered college-level (DCS/DEC) programs. DVS programs had lower admission requirements and were less intensive than DEC programs, which contributed to the discrepancy in enrolment and graduation rates.

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF STUDENTS, GRADUATES, AND GRADUATION RATE

Program	Admitted	Graduated	Graduation Rate
Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (DVS/DEP)	145	92	63%
Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (DVS/DEP)	50	37	74%
Subtotal - DVS/DEP Programs	**195**	**129**	**66%**
Industrial Electronics in Instrumentation and Automation (DVS/DEC)	20	6	30%
Electronics Technology in Telecommunications/Computers (DCS/DEC)	5	3	60%
Subtotal - DVS/DEP Programs	**25**	**9**	**36%**
TOTAL	**220**	**138**	**63%**

Thanks to the substantial preparatory work outlined in Section 3, and the ongoing support throughout the training program, there was a graduation rate of 63% across all four programs and 66% when looking only at the DVS/DEP programs. The majority of these students completed their program within the expected timeframes, although some needed extensions to complete their programs.

TABLE 7: GRADUATION TIMELINES BY GENDER

	Electromechanics			Industrial Mechanics			Electrical Engineering/Telecoms			Industrial Electronics		
	M	W	Total	M	W	Total	M	W	Total	M	W	Total
Within expected timeframes	50	17	**67**	22	10	**32**	1	0	**1**	0	0	**0**
With additional time	16	9	**25**	4	1	**5**	2	0	**2**	4	2	**6**
Percentage of completion within expected timeframes	**72.9%**			**86.5%**			**33.3%**			**0.0%**		

Others left their program and then re-enroled later on.

TABLE 8: ENROLMENT FREQUENCY AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

Type of Enrolment	Re-enroled			Re-enroled and Graduated		
	M	W	Total	M	W	Total
2nd enrolment	26	6	**32**	13	2	**15**
3rd enrolment	3	1	**4**	2	0	**2**
Different program	4	4	**8**	4	4	**8**
Total			**44**			**25**

TABLE 9: STUDENTS INTERRUPTIONS, RETURNS, AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

# of Interruptions/ Extensions of Studies	Interrupted & Returned			Interrupted, Returned & Graduated		
	M	W	Total	M	W	Total
1	15	12	**27**	9	10	**19**
2	4	3	**7**	3	3	**6**
3	2	0	**2**	2	0	**2**
Total			**36**			**27**

These patterns exemplify the importance of offering the program over the course of several years. Many TEHQ program graduates were only able to complete the program because they were able to get an extension and/or re-enrol later on. TEHQ students were adults, often with many family obligations and responsibilities, and it is understandable that things may arise that interrupt schooling, such as a pregnancy or illness of a dependant. The 15-year span of the TEHQ program meant that those faced with such circumstances still had an opportunity to complete their programs.

Overall, despite the many challenges faced by Cree students highlighted throughout this report, including language barriers, cultural differences, lack of prerequisites and preparedness issues, the graduation rates were:

- **Significantly higher than rates by the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services**: A 2016 analysis from the CSB found that "over a 5-year period (2010-2015), 30 out of a sample study of 109 students completed their programs and earned a certificate and/or diploma." *Source: Cree School Board Annual Report, 2016-2017*.

- **Slightly higher than Canada-wide averages**: According to Statistics Canada, 57% of students who started a career, technical, or professional training diploma in 2016/2017 had graduated four years later.

- **On par with Quebec averages**: A Quebec Government 2004 report (Student Flow from Secondary School to University) stated that out of the 100 students of all ages enroled in programs leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), 63 earned a diploma (63%). A 2010 report, Vocational and Technical Training in Quebec, stated that "for technical training students enroled in programs leading to a DCS, [graduation rates] are slightly higher than 60%, provided that changes in the programs of study and duration of training are not taken into account."

In reviewing these data points, it is important to re-emphasize that many of the students began their TEHQ journeys without having even completed their Secondary School Diplomas or meeting French language criteria. Given these challenges, the graduation rates are a strong reflection of both the dedication of the students and the high standards of the programs offered.

Finally, it is also important to recognize that the positive outcomes of the training programs extend beyond mere figures and statistics. For many students, the TEHQ program offered truly life-changing opportunities. Here are quotes from interviews conducted by the Communications Officer as part of a campaign.

> "Personally, the program has changed me a lot. It made me realize that I'm capable of doing different things. I want to be a role model." - *A TEHQ student*

> "I feel that I have something. I have a career waiting for me instead of being in doubt all the time. Now I know that after this course, I have a career and it is going to be a good career. I have become more responsible." - *A TEHQ student*

> "Since I started, I was shy and really introverted, the program helped me change, and be able to open up myself to other people. It helps you build your confidence in yourself." - *A TEHQ student*

> "It is something that I will be very proud of myself to accomplish." - *A TEHQ student*

> "I'm looking forward to working with Hydro-Québec. Hopefully, I live a healthy life and work as long as I can." - *A TEHQ student*

The impact of the TEHQ program provided students with the confidence and clarity to pursue meaningful careers, to improve their lives. These personal quotes highlight how the program not only transformed educational outcomes but also empowered the Cree participants to envision a brighter future for themselves and consequently in the long run for their communities.

4.4.6 Financial Data

Financial data was compiled based on initial budget allocations approved by the Niskamoon Board of Directors for amounts to be transferred to educational institutions and the Cree School Board to deliver both pre-requisite programs as well as the four educational programs. Note that it was not possible to separate these amounts into separate sub-categories, and so they are presented in a consolidated manner. Furthermore, allocations for the Cree School Board include additional support mechanisms for students, therefore the actual amounts should be viewed with caution.

Between 2003-2017, allocations to the CSB accounted for 41% of all budgeted amounts. Comparably, allocations to educational institutions for the same period accounted for 6% (see Section 6 for more details). In fact, financial data demonstrates an overall shift from direct transfers to educational institutions to funnelling all amounts through the Cree School Board, which became the lone entity responsible for implementing these funds from 2011-2012 onward. Furthermore, the figure below demonstrates a generally upward trend of allocations for programs between 2003-2004 and 2010-2011, peaking at over $3.5M that same year. Allocations progressively decreased thereafter, with the last allocation of approximately $1.4M passed for the 2016-2017 year.

FIGURE 5: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS
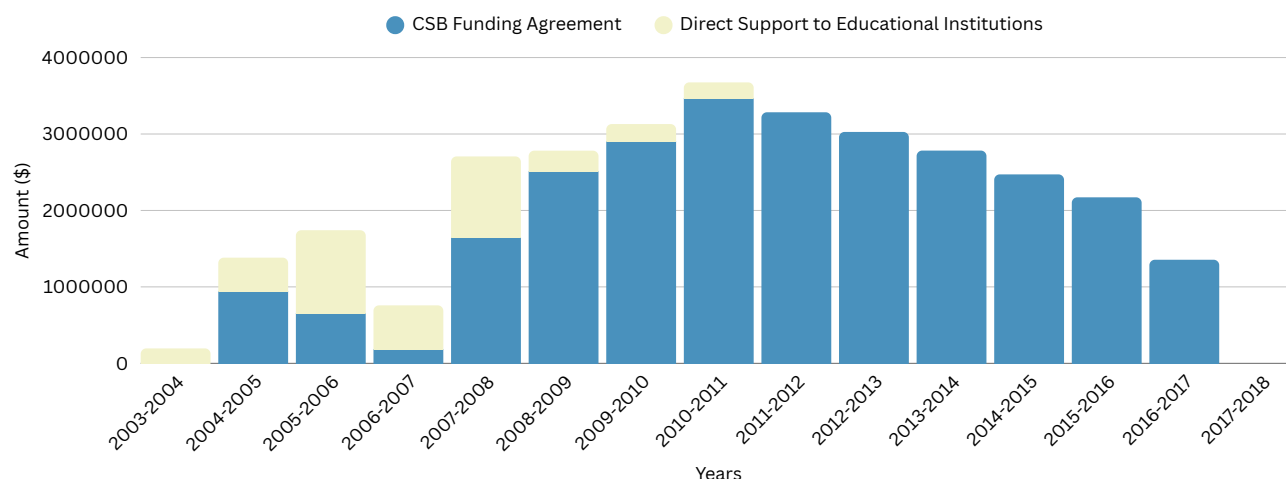
Costs directly incurred by Apatisiiwin/Niskamoon account for 53% of the total allocations for the program since 2003. These include direct student support measures as well as administrative costs to deliver the program, in particular relating to running offices in Rouyn-Noranda as well as several other locations over time.

Analysis of the amounts allocated for student support measures demonstrates an evolution of the type of measures funded directly by Apatisiiwin/Niskamoon over time. Most notably, from 2007-2008 onward, post-secondary sponsorship costs were incurred directly by the Cree School Board. Comparably, monthly incentives funding (incentives delivered based on individual merit) increased significantly towards the end of the program, while funding to the Student Activity Fund remained relatively consistent throughout the program life cycle. The figure below shows the evolution of direct financial support and incentives[8] over time.

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[8] Note that this accounts for direct incentives and funds provided to students and does not include services, such as psychosocial support provided by external consultants, or guidance and support provided by Student Centre staff.

FIGURE 6: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR STUDENT SUPPORT MEASURES
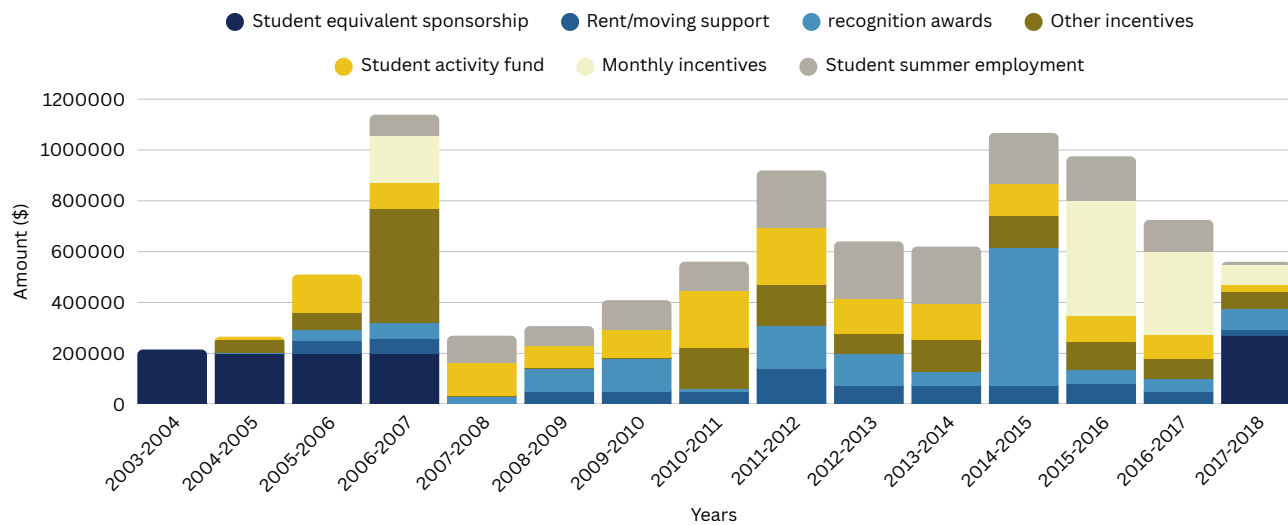
The following figure presents the evolution of administrative costs for the program over time. Between 2003-2008, salaries and benefits made up approximately one quarter of administrative costs. This proportion increased to approximately 50% thereafter, and remained at that level thereafter. Amounts allocated for program recruitment, promotion and graduation events peaked between 2007-2009, and then tapered off towards the end of the program. The remaining budget amounts remained relatively stable throughout the program life-cycle.

FIGURE 7: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION
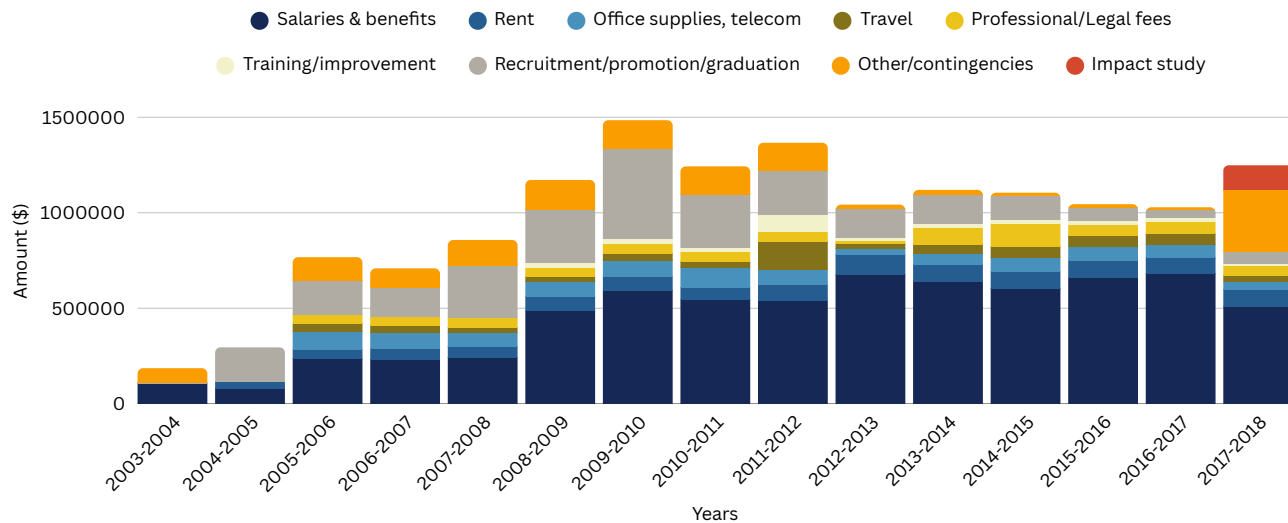
For full details on the breakdown of budget allocations, see section 6 - Financial Data.

4.4.7 Recommendations: Technical Training Programs

12 **Choose institutional partners with cultural awareness:** The institutions that provided TEHQ training played fundamental roles in the success of the programs, and their awareness of the needs of Cree students was crucial. When selecting partners to offer future programs, experience working with Cree students and partnering with the Cree Nation should be considered. Furthermore, if there are no institutions with this experience who can offer the program, steps should be taken to fill this cultural gap.

13 **Diversify training programs:** While the TEHQ program focused on specific technical trades that had permanent employment prospects at Hydro-Québec, a more diverse range of employment options would better accommodate Cree people with varying educational backgrounds and interests. The gap between existing education levels and program requirements created substantial barriers for many potential participants, while others were qualified for the programs but not interested in the career path itself. A broader spectrum of training options would allow participants to choose paths aligned with their individual interests and aptitudes, increasing participation overall.

14 **Negotiate customizations to standard programs in order to better meet student needs:** Through negotiations, the Cree program administrators worked with Centre Polymétier to extend the Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics DEP program from 1,800 to 2,100 hours of training, providing Cree students with the in-depth learning time and practice needed to work successfully alongside more seasoned electricians. They also successfully negotiated a week off for Cree traditional activities, which was much appreciated by the students. While these were significant improvements, additional adaptations may have helped to support employment integration; for example, lengthening the program to integrate a work-study model and include soft skill development.

15 **Consider strategies to help bridge workplace gap experience between Cree and non-Cree Hydro-Québec workers:** Non-Cree hires for positions that were targeted by the TEHQ program are typically required to have eight years of prior experience, while Cree workers were hired directly out of their training program. As a result, non-Cree workers had between 8,000-10,000 hours of additional experience. The need to integrate with a more experienced cohort can increase the challenges faced by Cree graduates, not only socio-culturally but also with safety measures, and best practices that are often learned by experience. While closing this gap completely may not be possible, integrating as much on the job training as possible could help to navigate this critical difference.

16 **Conduct a job needs analysis early and often:** As previously mentioned, students typically selected programs based on their personal interests and prerequisites. One important factor was typically overlooked however - the number of relevant vacant positions at Hydro-Québec. This would lead to some challenges down the road, as the TEHQ program ultimately trained more Electro-mechanics than were needed by Hydro-Québec. A needs analysis with a range of stakeholders, such as Directors, supervisors and union representatives, could have provided clear data on current and projected positions from the employer, ensuring that the number of people trained aligned with the number of jobs available. Such an analysis could have been repeated on a regular basis to ensure that training programs still aligned with employment needs.

17 **Develop supportive housing policies and solutions for students:** Knowing they had somewhere to live when they moved for training was critically important for students, and Niskamoon's housing policy was very successful in minimizing this burden. However, dealing with landlords on a case-by-case basis was extremely taxing for administrators. Future programs could consider operating a residence specifically for Cree students and their families, or renting a group of apartments on their behalf, to help ease this burden even further. In setting up such a student housing solution, it would be important to consider the needs of dependents as many students were also parents.

18 **Ensure availability of childcare at the location of study:** Childcare was a significant challenge faced by TEHQ students, as many brought their young children with them when they moved for the program. Niskamoon went to great lengths to secure childcare spaces for students, experiencing much trial-and-error and uncertainty at first. It would be worthwhile for future such programs to consider childcare from the beginning, putting a plan in place to ensure that students with children have access to care while they are studying. This is especially important when a program is located outside of the community, where students may not have access to the same support systems that they might at home.

19 **Ensure all instruction in the working language:** Since French is the working language at Hydro-Québec, it was critical for students to receive all their training in French. Proficiency was not only essential for success in the workplace, but a safety issue since workers deal with dangerous equipment, and they must communicate with great ease to ensure everyone's safety and efficiency. Therefore, it is essential that training for any similar program be given in the working language.

20 **Teacher empowerment and recognition:** Instructors played a key role in the success of the TEHQ program success. Cree students benefitted from several incredible, dedicated teachers, who went to great lengths to support students and set them up for success. It was important to recognize the importance of these teachers and to include them in activities like graduations and orientations, so students could see familiar mentors at these important moments and feel a sense of community inside and outside of the classroom.

21 **Maintain communication with municipality where training takes place:** When a significant number of Cree people relocate for a training program, there may be local impacts - such as an increased demand on school placement for their children, pressure on rental housing availability, and, in some situations, tensions around cultural differences could cause tension. In the case of Rouyn-Noranda, meetings with municipal leadership helped to mitigate these challenges. It is therefore recommended to engage with local leadership prior to launching similar programs.

22 **Ensure one-on-one student support is available:** Although systems, programs, and policies are extremely important in enabling student success, they alone are not enough. Many students needed encouragement, emotional support, and a connection to home when they moved for their training programs. For this reason, it was imperative that individual support staff be available to help students through these issues. It was also important that students knew who these staff members were and had a chance to build a trusting connection, so they felt comfortable going to them with concerns or challenges. Along with having these staff members available to students, establishing a culture of communication where students have the tools and opportunity share their experiences early and often is key.

23 **Analyze the efficacy of financial incentives and support beyond Cree School Board entitlements:** In an effort to attract and retain students, the Niskamoon Corporation provided many incentives above and beyond Cree School Board allotments, such as rewards for successful semesters, and laptops. Whether or not these incentives were effective was an open question for many at Niskamoon, and it would be beneficial for future initiatives of this kind to be clearly aligned with a goal (such as recruitment or retention) and to be analyzed annually to ensure the investment was having the intended impact.

4.5 GRADUATION, HIRING, AND INTEGRATION INTO THE HYDRO-QUÉBEC WORKFORCE

Once they completed a training program, students often felt very excited by the prospect of working at Hydro-Québec. They were regularly exposed to the workplace throughout recruitment and training and often felt very motivated to take this next step.

> "The closer I get to finishing this course, I see myself more in Hydro. It looks like it's a very good place to go work too." - *TEHQ program graduate*

To take this next step in their career, TEHQ program graduates needed to apply for an open position and be hired to a vacant position. Jobs were not guaranteed upon graduation, and this was yet another challenge Cree students needed to overcome to reach their goal of permanent employment.

Thankfully, the Cree Employment Agreement allowed for the development of equitable hiring and workplace integration measures. These measures aimed to help Cree candidates successfully turning their new credentials into permanent employment at Hydro-Québec, while also maintaining and promoting Hydro-Québec's employment standards. Initiatives that emerged from this stipulation, such as employee coaching, benefited both the employer and the Cree workers by improving the transition to work and maximizing the number of Cree workers in permanent positions.

4.5.1 Experience

While a great deal of positive effort was put forth to integrate TEHQ graduates following graduation, integration was among the most challenging aspects of the program. Graduates were prioritized for permanent jobs despite having less professional experience than other Hydro-Québec workers, which could lead to challenging social dynamics. This, combined with pronounced culture and language barriers, could make it difficult for Cree workers to navigate their new workplace.

Another significant challenge was the fact that TEHQ graduates often arrived at Hydro-Québec to find that there was no vacant permanent role for them to fill. Instead, they were hired without a set position and expected to apply when someone retired or left. This amplified the challenging social and professional dynamics; managers would urge Crees to apply when a vacancy emerged, while co-workers might ask them not to so that another person could get the coveted job. As a result, many Crees working for Hydro-Québec who are "permanent workers" do not have a specific position.

Despite these challenges, 122 graduates became employees at Hydro-Québec, with 101 eventually becoming permanent. These successful integrations were possible thanks to a combination of support measures, on-the-job training, encouragement from managers, and above all, the determination of the graduates themselves.

4.5.2 Support Measures

Graduation and Student Recognition

Completing the TEHQ program training was a significant milestone, and celebrating this achievement provided a great morale boost for students, families, and teachers. Each year, the Niskamoon Corporation organized a graduation ceremony that included a dinner, gifts, and awards to recognize the graduates. A golf tournament was also organized for several years. These events were meaningful to many and served as a valuable motivation to graduates as they proceeded toward their goal of permanent employment.

Prioritization of JBNQA Beneficiaries for Permanent Jobs

To maximize the number of Cree beneficiaries hired to permanent positions, Hydro-Québec adjusted their hiring process to prioritize Cree applicants. Every applicant who had graduated from the TEHQ program was granted a hiring interview, and employment was offered to all TEHQ program graduates who met all their hiring criteria. It is important to emphasize that, despite these measures, the hiring requirements were the same for Cree employees as for non-Crees. TEHQ program graduates were still required to complete an entry test, French proficiency test, an interview, and a medical exam. A valid driver's license was also required.

HYDRO-QUÉBEC STANDARD HIRING PROCESS

Example: Typical Selection Process - Apparatus Electrician

Candidates selected from HQ's labour pool database. Training and work experience is considered.

Entry tests
100 standard candidates

French tests
100 standard candidates

Interview
6 standard candidates

Medical exam
3 standard candidates

Hired: 3/10
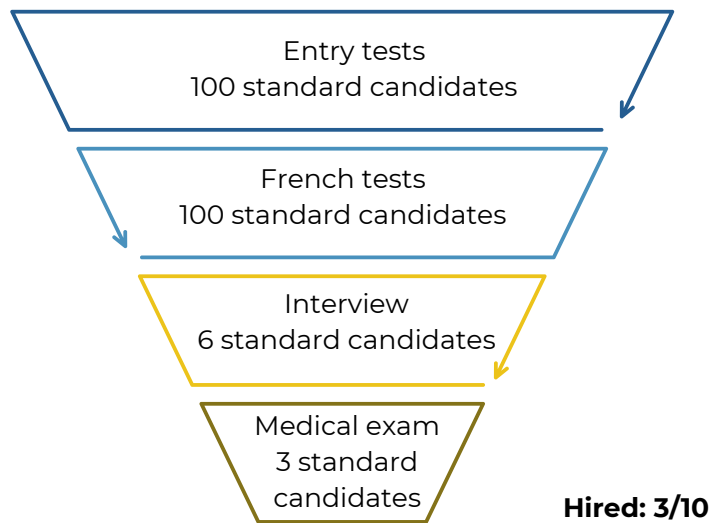
HYDRO-QUÉBEC APATISIIWIN SPECIFIC HIRING PROCESS

Example: Specific selection process for Cree candidates - 2008 Apparatus Electrician and Apparatus Mechanic

Candidates provided via Niskamoon Corporation.

Selection of the students - Approximately 35
Training - Approximately 15 students

Entry tests
12 Cree candidates

French tests
(with possible retakes)
12 Cree candidates

Interview
12 Cree candidates

Medical exam
11 Cree candidates

Hired: 11/12
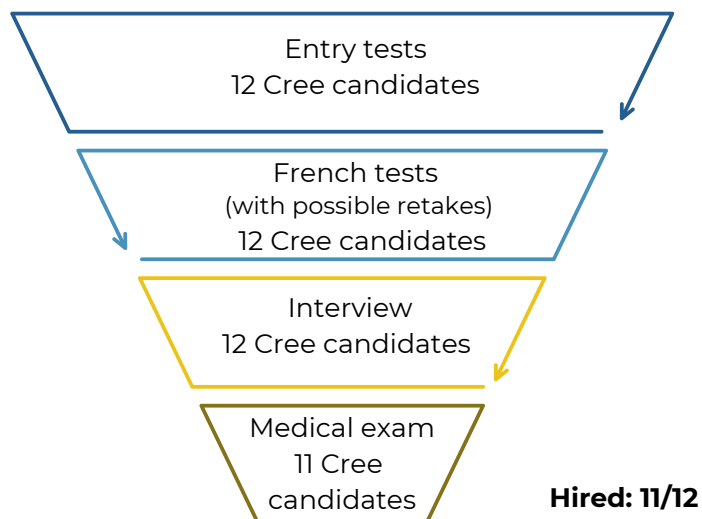
Probationary periods, as well as a period of temporary employment before becoming a permanent employee, also helped to ensure standards were maintained despite there being a less selective hiring process for TEHQ program applicants. Once hired to a temporary position, TEHQ program graduates could apply for permanent jobs; if the job was in the James Bay area, they would be prioritized for hiring.

Adjustments to the Hydro-Québec French test and personality tests
As mentioned earlier in this report, issues with the Hydro-Québec hiring tests were identified early on following the signing of the Cree Employment Agreement. This resulted in the commissioning of a new French proficiency test, which focused on working language. Investments were also made to improve the cultural accessibility of the personality test.

Welcoming Plan and Coaching
The Hydro-Québec welcoming plan aimed to support the integration of new Cree employees through training and coaching. With regards to training, employees hired from the TEHQ program were given six training sessions on the following topics:

1. Hydro-Québec and their rules
2. Group, team and interpersonal relations – a sense of belonging
3. My personality – the importance of taking charge and acting
4. Communications – at the heart of integration
5. Daring – the key to integration
6. Handling my emotions – essential for long-term success

After, they were paired with a coach who provided one-to-one mentorship and support. Their Hydro-Québec coach supported them for 6-12 months, and helped to:

- Clearly explain the work to be done
- Ensure progress was made in performing tasks
- Guide workers to understand workplace standards and norms
- Help workers resolve challenges
- Facilitate communication with the team
- Provide support and encouragement

This welcoming plan gave new Cree Hydro-Québec employees some of the guidance and encouragement they needed during their critical probationary period.

Training on Cree culture for Non-Cree Hydro-Québec Workers
Just as Cree workers needed to learn about the workplace culture of Hydro-Québec, it was vital for non-Cree managers and colleagues to be prepared to welcome the many Cree workers coming out of the TEHQ program. To support this goal, all Hydro-Québec employees had one day of training on Cree culture, while managers and coaches had two full days. Ensuring people on both sides understood and respected one another was critical to successfully meeting the Cree Employment Agreement's hiring goals.

4.5.3 Outcomes and Statistics

Once TEHQ students graduated[9] from their programs, most went on to work at Hydro-Québec as expected. In total, 122 of the 138 graduates ended up working at Hydro-Québec. In the years that followed, 101 went on to permanent roles. By September 2024, 84 remained.

TABLE 10: CREE CANDIDATES HIRED AND EMPLOYED AT HYDRO-QUÉBEC, INCLUDING RETENTION FIGURES FROM 2019-2024.

Number and Rate	Men	Women	Total
Employees Hired	88	34	**122**
Employees who left before becoming permanent	13	8	**21**
Employees who become permanent	75	26	**101**
Employees who left after becoming permanent	7	1	**8**
Permanent Employees as of September 30, 2019	68	25	**93**
Permanent Employees as of September 30, 2024	-	-	**84**

At present, we unfortunately know very little about those who did not go on to work at Hydro-Québec, except for the fact that out of the total number of employees in this group represented 11% of men and 12% of women.

TABLE 11: TEHQ PROGRAM GRAGUDATES WHO DID NOT WORK AT HYDRO-QUÉBEC

Gender	Number	Percentage
Men	11	11%
Women	5	12%
Total	**16**	**23%**

This data illustrates that, even in an opportunity for permanent employment, graduates can still choose their next step in life and therefore may not work at the intended employer. Likewise, those who follow the intended employment pathway may not stay long-term. While some of this is expected, it would be advantageous to better understand the motivations and reasoning behind why some people chose to leave while others stay. A longitudinal study would provide better understanding of the student experience and decision to work at Hydro-Québec, illuminating areas of improvement or need that could be addressed in future programs.

4.5.4 Financial Data

Funding for integration measures was not covered in the TEHQ program.

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[9] Graduation data, including the number of students who graduated within the expected timeframe and data on re-enrolment levels, can be found in section 4.4.5 as part of the reflection on student experiences in the training programs.

4.5.5 Recommendations: Graduation, Hiring, and Integration into the Hydro-Québec Workforce

24 **Thoroughly analyze hiring requirements to identify cultural bias and extraneous requirements:** In 2002, board members recognized that the required Hydro-Québec French test was designed for office jobs rather than the jobs Cree people were training for. In response, Hydro-Québec committed to creating a new test for working language. It was also noted that the personality test was not culturally sensitive, and in August 2003, the Apatisiiwin Corporation allotted $17,500 to help Hydro-Québec ensure it was attuned to cultural differences. These were huge achievements that had long-term benefits for Cree jobseekers and workers.

25 **Differences in language and culture in the working environment should not be underestimated:** When Cree workers began at Hydro-Québec, many found it difficult to integrate into a dominantly Quebecois workforce. French proficiency was low amongst most Cree people, and they faced many cultural differences. During the TEHQ program, concrete actions were taken, such as the creation of a course to help Hydro-Québec workers understand Cree culture and the coaching program. In 2011, they also bolstered the role of the Employment Counsellor for Cree Workplace Integration by adding a psychosocial profile, which they say supported program outcomes. These efforts continue to have a tremendous impact and increasing the scale of such initiatives (for example, additional employment counsellor(s) to allow for more one-on-one support) would greatly benefit Cree workers.

26 **Integration needs to be a team effort:** While the worker is ultimately responsible for their own success, it can be helpful to ensure that everyone is as informed, prepared, and supportive as possible, including supervisors, coworkers, and families. Training for colleagues and managers, as well as efforts to prepare the workers' support systems looking to start their careers at Hydro-Québec, were important parts of the workplace integration strategy. Hydro-Québec has continued to invest in Indigenous relations in the years since the program ended, building on the foundation created by TEHQ initiatives and collaborations.

27 **Structure the coaching program for consistency:** The Hydro-Québec coaching program was highly valuable to many, however, it needed more structure. This led to inconsistent experiences. Establishing clearer expectations, implementing scheduled check-ins, and having a more structured approach may have helped more Cree workers to fully maximize the benefits of this valuable experience.

28 **Focus on Cree worker perspectives in evaluations:** The value of continual improvement cannot be overstated, and regular and thorough program evaluations can make an important difference. In the case of workplace integration with the TEHQ program, evaluations of the programs were primarily focused on the perspective of the employer, with data mainly looking at whether a worker successfully integrated from training to employment. Understanding the experiences and nuances more often from the Cree worker's perspective could have provided valuable insights and led to even more improvements.

29 **Clearly communicate physical job demands early:** One of the workplace integration challenges trainees faced was related to the physical requirements. The jobs that Cree people were hired for following their training programs were often highly physical, and some workers were ill-prepared to perform at that level despite having strong technical skills. Communicating these requirements early on, and often, could help people ensure that they are suited for this career path.

30 **Plan for long-term retention and workforce continuity:** Although the TEHQ program had considerable success attracting trainees and supporting them through the initial hiring stages, more forethought regarding the long-term outlook of TEHQ employees would have greatly benefitted all parties. Considering how to keep workers engaged and integrated in their jobs at Hydro-Québec over the long-term is essential to maximize the benefit of an investment in a program such as the TEHQ. Additionally, discussions on how to maintain a Cree workforce over time are critical, as turnover is inevitable even if there is a strong retention program in place (for example, due to retirements, illness, or career progression). Such planning can prevent the loss of critical progress, allowing the benefits of the training program to be felt for generations to come.

05

LONG-TERM SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITIES

5.1 BACKGROUND

From early on, TEHQ program administrators understood the importance of addressing the math and science levels of students in elementary and high school. The Cree Employment Agreement spanned fifteen years, which meant that even students who were at the primary level when the training programs were established could be potential candidates by graduation. For such reasons, funding was also allocated to support science and math education at Cree School Board schools.

Budget was thereby allocated to "Long-Term Support to the Communities," providing funding for communities to pursue programs that aligned with the long-term vision of the TEHQ. This model gave communities the opportunity to pursue programs and solutions that would be effective in their community context. Many of the programs and initiatives developed through this funding persist to this day.

5.2 ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL OUTINGS AND SUPPORT SUBSIDIES

The following outings and in-school initiatives had been established through subsidies by the TEHQ program. Many were so successful that the CSB negotiated alternative funding to continue these efforts past the expiration of the Cree Employment Agreement, which demonstrates the ingenuity of those who organized these initiatives and the positive long-term impact this kind of agreement can have on the Cree Nation.

Science & Technology Trips
The Niskamoon Corporation supported educational initiatives or outings proposals submitted by local Cree entities that promoted the following:

- **Science and Technology:** Any programs or projects that seek to enhance the education of science and technology

- **Cree Technology and Innovation:** Any programs or projects that seek to enhance the teaching and development of innovation strongly based in the traditional values and teachings of Cree culture

- **Professional Development:** Any programs or projects that seek to enhance the hands-on education of students through a better understanding of professions within the domain of science and technology

Source: Niskamoon Corporation Policy on Proposals for Educational Initiatives and Outings

A maximum of $3,000 per community, distributed on a first-come/first-serve basis, up to 50% of the total budget for any program or project was available.

With additional support from the Cree School Board, these funds were used to finance trips for Secondary 4 and 5 students that aimed to expose and immerse students in the fields of STEM (which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Itineraries varied year to year, but students often visited Hydro-Québec installments, the Centre des Sciences de Montréal, and educational institution(s) offering TEHQ training programs. These trips were a great opportunity to promote the TEHQ program to students who would soon graduate, as well as fostering engagement in STEM career paths in general.

Math and Science Enrichment Program

One of the fundamental challenges at the start of the TEHQ program was that CSB schools were unable to offer many science and math prerequisites. This meant that, even if a student had completed their Secondary School Diploma, they often did not have Math 436 and Science 436, both of which were needed to apply for the TEHQ's Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC) training programs.

Niskamoon provided financial support to help the CSB offer these courses where and when they were able to find teachers. Despite these efforts, this remained a challenge through the duration of the program: the legacy of residential schools and systemic issues in the education sector meant that there were few locals who could teach these subjects, and recruiting Math and Science teachers from outside the communities continues to be a challenging prospect. Dedicating resources to these efforts was helpful in allowing the CSB to expand its recruitment, but a more comprehensive strategy is needed to fully address this challenge in the future.

Science Clubs and Fairs

The Niskamoon Corporation helped to fund science fairs and clubs at most CSB secondary schools, which gave CSB students a valuable opportunity to delve deeper into their scientific interests. Through the fairs and clubs, students created their own projects to showcase, with some even qualifying for regional science fairs. Thanks to both the enthusiasm of the schools and the financial support of the Niskamoon Corporation, these science fairs were highly successful. Science fairs and clubs continue to have a strong presence in the schools even after the end of the program and incentives, giving countless students a chance to shine while exploring STEM topics of interest.

Science Camps and Workshops

Through funding from the Niskamoon Corporation, CSB schools offered science camps and workshops for secondary-level students throughout the academic year. The activities aimed to enrich the current science curriculum being delivered to the students. Schools sought partnerships with Elephant Thoughts, Mad Science, and IBM to develop these camps.

5.3 ELEPHANT THOUGHTS

Elephant Thoughts is a registered charity that works to "support positive change through education and opportunity." This is one of the many enduring legacies of the TEHQ program, as Elephant Thoughts first partnered with the Niskamoon Corporation as part of the long-term strategy to prepare students for Hydro-Québec opportunities. Initially, the Niskamoon Corporation hired them to offer exciting and engaging STEM literacy programming in each CSB school over a 4-to-16-week period. Each local school administration built an action plan to orient Elephant Thoughts' efforts. Some of the services and activities they provided included:

- Organizing, and supporting staff & students with local and regional science fairs
- Providing curriculum-based workshops for students
- Organizing community programming, including activity nights, telescopes, and mini evening courses
- Providing professional development for teachers
- Organizing mentorship programs (kids teaching kids)
- Arranging for museum-style programming for students
- Offering in-class support, guidance, and teaching for schools
- Science and Math programs
- Coordinating equipment loan programs for science teachers

Elephant Thoughts quickly became an integral part of the Science and Math programs at many local schools. Secondary students enjoyed their workshops and after-school camps, which included learning skills like how to build circuit boards, how to design materials using computer software, and how to use telescopes. Meanwhile, thousands of Elementary students and countless other community members were amazed and inspired by the portable science centre, inflatable Star Lab planetarium, and hands-on experiments that Elephant Thoughts provided.

To this day, Elephant Thoughts has an enduring presence in Cree School Board schools, providing tutoring and special activities in all nine communities year after year (now in direct partnership with the CSB). The success of this ongoing partnership is clear evidence of the positive legacy of the TEHQ program. The Niskamoon Corporation's comprehensive approach to fulfilling the goals of the Cree Employment Agreement, which included strong consideration of the needs of Elementary and High school students, has paved the way for multiple generations of Cree students to build a love of STEM and consider and pursue career paths in this area.

5.4 FINANCIAL DATA

Direct funding to communities for long-term initiatives in schools only began under the Niskamoon Corporation in 2005-2006. Funding did not follow any clear pattern, but rather fluctuated according to the flow of local initiatives and proposals. Funding peaked in 2009-2010 at over $900,000 in allocations. Conversely, funding was significantly decreased in 2013-2014 onwards, following a decision by the Niskamoon Corporation to re-orient priorities, as well as a commitment from the Cree School Board to fund certain activities under other programs unrelated to the TEHQ Program. Overall, $5.2M was allocated to long-term training programs.

FIGURE 8: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES
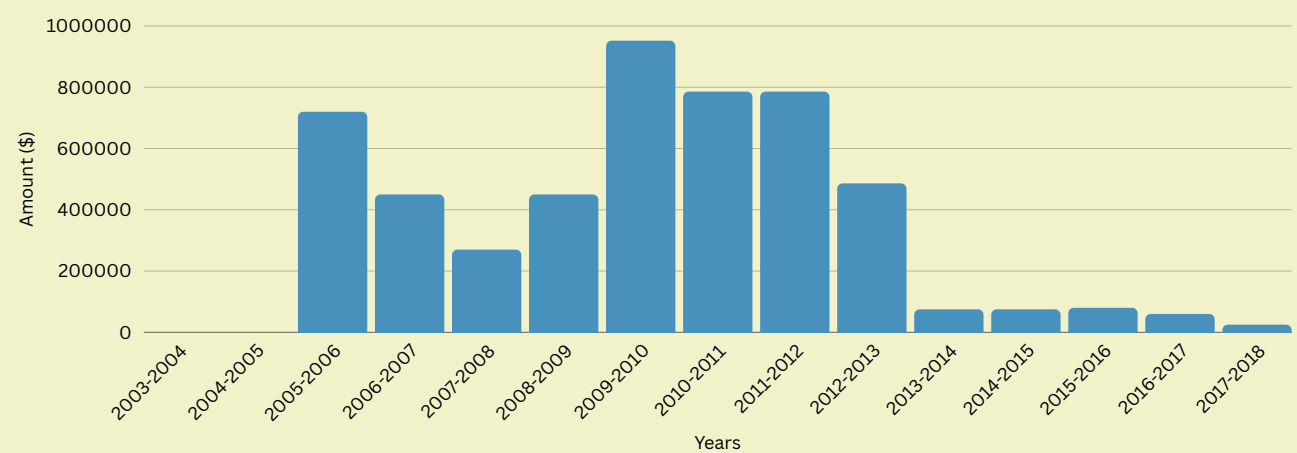
5.5 Recommendations: Long-term support to the communities

31 **Consider future jobs for Cree people when developing long-term training and employment strategies:** The Cree Employment Agreement spanned fifteen years, meaning that many potential trainees were in early Elementary school when the agreement was signed. Looking ahead and supporting STEM education for these younger Crees, rather than simply focusing on those who were adults in 2002, played a key role in the TEHQ's success. In the later years of the TEHQ program, recruiters greatly benefited from connecting with new cohorts of youth who had a stronger background in math and science thanks to these complementary programs.

32 **Collaborate with entities to offer complimentary programs:** By partnering with the Cree School Board and funding initiatives like Elephant Thoughts, Science Fairs, and STEM Trips, the Niskamoon Corporation was able to leverage the TEHQ program to improve interest and readiness in STEM careers for countless youth. Partnerships within the Cree Nation, as well as those with organizations like Elephant Thoughts, were what truly made this possible.

33 **Review complimentary programs regularly to ensure alignment and find new opportunities:** The complimentary programs offered through the Cree School Board had great benefits that are still being seen today, and it is highly recommended that future programs of this kind take the same approach. At the same time, it is imperative that organizers ensure that budget goes towards initiatives that clearly relate back to the objectives of an agreement or program; for example, it was beneficial for students on science trips to have a chance to visit Hydro-Québec facilities so they could learn more about relevant career opportunities. Collaborative meetings where the best options can be discussed, and results can be reviewed on a regular basis, can help support this.

06

FINANCIAL DATA

6 FINANCIAL DATA

As we know, the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) Program ran between 2002 to 2020. Between 2002-2004, the program was run by the Apatisiiwin Corporation, after which point it was consolidated into Niskamoon Corporation, an administrative entity created to manage numerous agreements signed between the James Bay Crees and Hydro-Québec. Thereafter, the program was run under the Training and Employment office.

Budgetary data for 2002-2004 was compiled based on resolutions passed by the Apatisiiwin Corporation. It should be noted that these were the very early days of the program, when the organization was still exploring options with regards to the training program.

Budgets for the programs were gradually ramped up over the years, peaking in the 2011-2012 year at nearly $7M.

The following figure 9 shows the budgeted amounts for the program as well as real expenditures. Note that in 2004-2005, due to the transfer of the program to the Niskamoon Corporation, retracing budgets proved to be very difficult. Note also that real expenditures show only those amounts managed directly by Niskamoon and so do not include the amounts transferred to the Cree School Board to manage their portion of the program.

FIGURE 9: BUDGET VS. REAL EXPENDITURES (2003-2020)
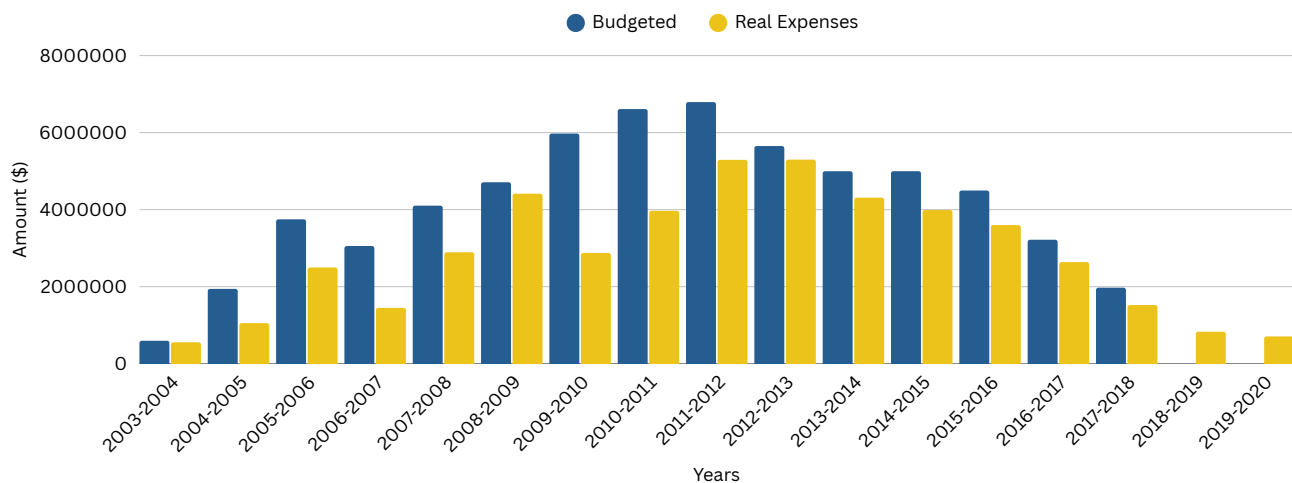
Upwards of $27M was transferred to Cree School Board to manage certain aspects of the TEHQ program, most notably agreements signed directly with educational institutions as well as post-secondary student support programs, both falling under their chartered mandate. This corresponds to 44% of all budget allocations. In addition, the Niskamoon Corporation funded certain educational institutions directly for a total of approximately $4.1M (6%). The remainder was managed directly by the Niskamoon Corporation. This is shown in the following figure.

FIGURE 10: PERCENTAGE OF TEHQ BUDGET MANAGED BY EACH PARTNER (APATISIIWIN/NISKAMOON CORPORATIONS, CREE SCHOOL BOARD, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS) (2003-2017)
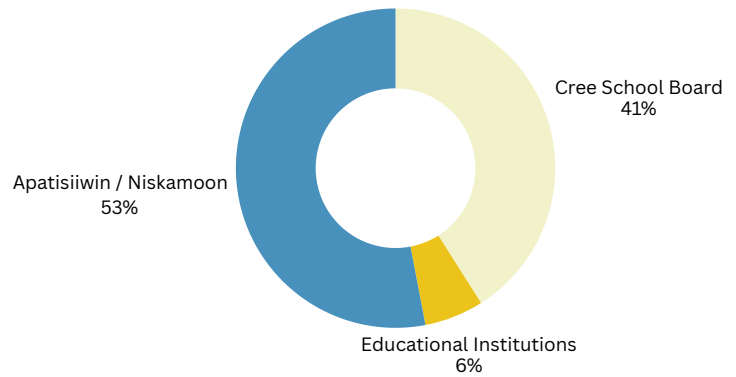

Cree School Board
41%

Apatisiiwin / Niskamoon
53%

Educational Institutions
6%

TABLE 12: NISKAMOON TRANSFERS TO CREE SCHOOL BOARD AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUDGET (2002-2020)

Table 12 shows the amounts transferred to the Cree School Board by the Niskamoon Corporation, as well as the percentage they represent of the total annual operating budget for the given year. On average, the allocation to CSB represents 43% of the total annual budget.

	CSB Budgeted	% of Total Program Budget
2022-2003	$ -	0%
2003-2004	$ -	0%
2004-2005	$938,528	48%
2005-2006	$651,267	17%
2006-2007	$178,200	6%
2007-2008	$1,651,795	40%
2008-2009	$2,505,221	53%
2009-2010	$2,899,959	49%
2010-2011	$3,459,250	54%
2011-2012	$3,284,325	48%
2012-2013	$3,027,000	54%
2013-2014	$2,783,000	56%
2014-2015	$2,471,640	49%
2015-2016	$2,171,640	48%
2016-2017	$1,355,000	42%
2017-2018	$ -	0%
2018-2019	$ -	0%
2019-2020	$ -	0%
TOTAL	**$26,438,298**	**43%**

A total of $46,295,386 was spent on the TEHQ program between 2003 and 2020. Detailed financial data for funds managed directly by Apatisiiwin/Niskamoon is incomplete for the entire period. However, an analysis was performed to compare the proportion of budget allocated (2003-2017) vs. real expenditures (2008-2021). This analysis shows that expenditures were lower in all budget categories except for program administration, which was 9% higher than the amount budgeted. This suggests that the administrative burden to run the program was perhaps higher than originally anticipated.

An analysis of budget allocations shows that half (47%) of the budget was earmarked for administration (including salaries and benefits, rent, office supplies, and recruitment campaigns). Financial incentives, including the student summer employment program and student equivalent sponsorship, accounted for another 30% of the budget. Long-term support to the communities, which granted funding to communities and organizations to provide STEM programming and other supportive initiatives, made up 16%. Only 7% went directly to psychosocial support, which was limited to orientation programs and counselling workshops.

The lack of investment in psychosocial support left salaried employees (accounted for under administration) to carry most of the burden of supporting student psychosocial needs in ways that exceeded the scope of their job or their professional expertise. In fact, psychosocial investments only began in 2011, suggesting that they were put in place in response to a gap identified earlier in the program.

Future organizers of a similar program may consider if it would be possible to decrease the investment in administration in favour of more specialized support services for students, thereby allowing administrative staff to focus more on organizational matters. While administration will inevitably always represent a large portion of the investment in any training and hiring program, it is worth considering whether this is the ideal budgetary balance.

FIGURE 11: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS OF TEHQ PROGRAM FUNDS MANAGED DIRECTLY BY APATISIIWIN/NISKAMOON CORPORATIONS BY EXPENSE CATEGORY (2003-2017)

Long-term Support to Communities
16%

Rouyn-Noranda/Amos/Chibougamau/Gatineau Offices
47%

Financial Incentives
30%

Psycho-social Support
7%
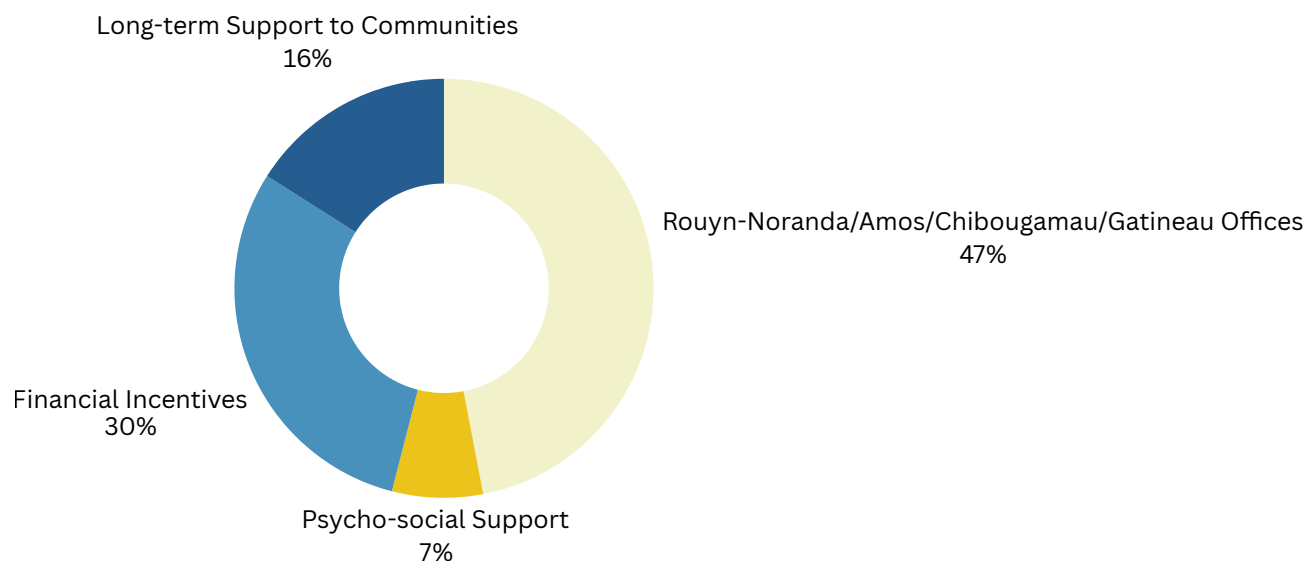
Notably, the proportion of expenses in the administration category increases to 60% when the real expenses are analyzed, in part due to lower amounts spent under long-term support to the communities (less than half of the amount budgeted was distributed).

TABLE 13: TEHQ FUNDS MANAGED BY NISKAMOON CORPORATION: BUDGET (2003-2017) VS. ACTUAL (2008-2021)

Category	Budgeted	Actual	Difference
Psycho-social support • Student Orientation Program • Counselling Workshops	7%	5%	-2%
Financial incentives • Student equivalent sponsorship • Student activity fund • Rent/moving support • Monthly incentives • Recognition awards • Student summer employment • Other incentives	30%	28%	-2%
Long-term support to communities (funding programs)	17%	8%	-9%
Administration - Regional Director and Rouyn-Noranda/Amos/Chibougamau/Gatineau Offices • Salaries and benefits • Rent • Office supplies, telecom • Travel • Professional/Legal fees • Training/improvement • Recruitment/promotion/graduation • Other/contingencies	47%	60%	+13%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**13%**

In analyzing the finances of a program such as the TEHQ and understanding what to expect in similar future programs, cost per student is a valuable metric. In the case of the TEHQ, costs started lower and increased as the program gained momentum, undoubtedly rising as additional needs were identified (for example, the addition of psycho-social support in 2011). Notably, the cost per student peaked just before the year with the highest enrolment, demonstrating the direct impact these expenses had on program success. In the final phase, costs stabilized at a sustainable level, achieving the desired goal of a predictable and manageable budget over time.

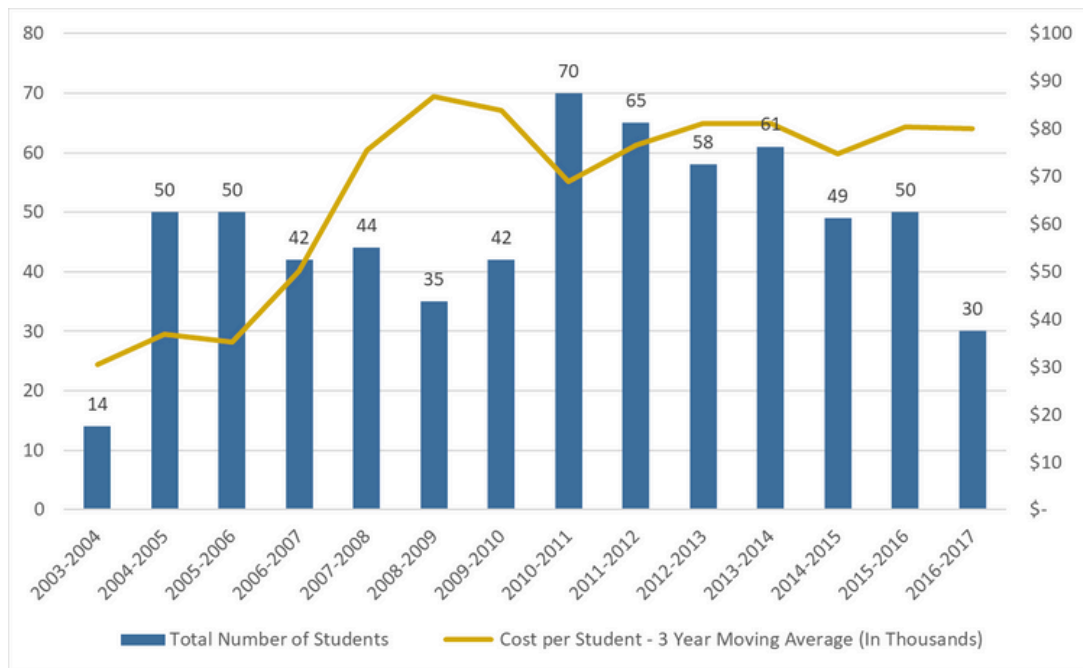## FIGURE 12: YEARLY NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND COST PER STUDENT (3 YEAR MOVING AVERAGE, IN THOUSANDS)

TABLE 14: YEARLY NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND PROGRAM COST PER STUDENT

Year	Total of Number of Students	Cost/Student	Year	Total of Number of Students	Cost/Student
2003-2004	14	$39,780.76	2010-2011	70	$56,715.70
2004-2005	50	$21,085.18	2011-2012	65	$81,428.97
2005-2006	50	$49,970.99	2012-2013	58	$91,358.30
2006-2007	42	$34,504.20	2013-2014	61	$70,684.36
2007-2008	44	$65,756.67	2014-2015	49	$81,412.25
2008-2009	35	$126,137.76	2015-2016	50	$71,989.39
2009-2010	42	$68,459.63	2016-2017	30	$87,957.86
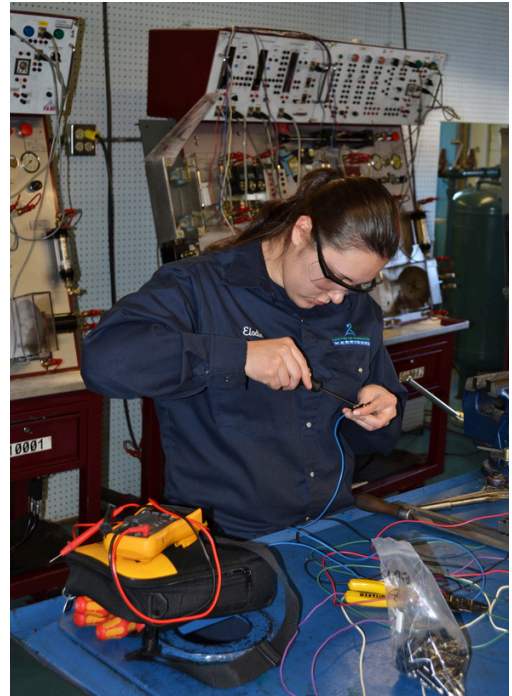
07

CONCLUSION

7.1 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

As discussed in the introduction, the TEHQ program is widely considered to have been a success. This comes from three significant indicators of success: The total number of graduates and permanent employees at Hydro-Québec; the graduation rate; and the capacity building impact of the program.

Key Performance Indicator #1: Number of permanent employees at Hydro-Québec.
The stated goal of the Cree Employment Agreement was to "have one hundred and fifty (150) Crees employed in permanent Hydro-Québec jobs within Le Complexe La Grande (1975)." This ambitious goal was based primarily on the number of potential positions, and was largely seen as unfeasible given Eeyou Istchee's relatively small and largely anglophone workforce. However, when viewed alongside its predecessor, the FIMA program, the training initiatives came close to reaching this goal: together, they produced 188 Cree graduates (138 from TEHQ and 50 from FIMA), with 136 being hired by Hydro-Québec (14 from FIMA as of 2002, plus 122 from TEHQ as of 2019). Of these, 101 became permanent employees.

As a result of these graduation and employment rates, Crees represented almost one-quarter of the permanent employees in the four job categories targeted by the TEHQ at Hydro-Québec. Women had an even more significant footprint, with Cree TEHQ graduates representing 62% of all women holding permanent jobs in those four categories at Hydro-Québec.

TABLE 15: NUMBER OF CREE AND NON-CREE EMPLOYEES AT HYDRO-QUÉBEC IN EEYOU ISTCHEE, BY JOB CATEGORY

Job Category	Non-Cree Employees			Cree Employees			Total
	M	W	Total	M	W	Total	Employees
Apparatus Mechanic	75	0	**75**	21	10	**31**	**106**
Apparatus Electrician	110	8	**118**	47	15	**62**	**180**
Telecommunications Technician	31	3	**34**	3	0	**3**	**37**
Automation Technician	88	5	**93**	3	0	**3**	**96**
Total	**304**	**16**	**320**	**74**	**25**	**99**	**419**

These numbers are particularly stark when considered relative to the population of the Cree Nation; for contrast, 1.09% of the Eeyou Istchee Cree labour force held one of the jobs targeted by the TEHQ program, compared to 0.007% of the Quebec labour force.[10]

A significant difference can also be seen when comparing the rate at which Crees graduated from TEHQ programs compared with Quebec as a whole.

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[10] Based on Labour Force data for Eeyou Istchee. Cree Labour Market Survey, Cree Human Resources Development, March 2008. <https://acee-ceaa.gc.ca/5D97CA58-docs/statistical_profile_2008-eng.pdf>

TABLE 16: PERCENTAGE OF CREE WORKFORCE WHO GRADUATED IN THE DIFFERENT TEHQ STREAMS VS. PERCENTAGE OF QUEBEC WORKFORCE WHO GRADUATED FROM ELECTRICIAN AND MECHANICAL PROGRAMS

	Program	Total Graduates	Labour Pool	% of Labour Pool
Cree Workforce	TEHQ Programs, 2003-2017 (15yr period)	138	9,245[13]	1.49%
	Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (DVS/DEP)	92	9,245	1.00%
	Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (DVS/DEC)	37	9,245	0.4%
	Industrial Electronics in Instrumentation and Automation (DCS/DEC)	6	9,245	0.06%
	Electronics Technology in Telecommunications/Computers (DCS/DEC)	3	9,245	0.03%
	Program	**Total Graduates**	**Labour Pool**	**% of Labour Pool**
Quebec Workforce	All related programs & Apprenticeships in Qc, 2008-2022 (15yr period)	24,354[11]	4,395,000[12]	0.55%
	Electricians + Electronics and Instrumentation	22,701 (19,269 Electricians + 3,432 E&I)	4,395,000	0.52%
	Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics	1,653	4,395,00	0.04%

Indeed, even when the comparison is expanded to include all graduates of any program in the job categories across the entire province, including the large category of "Electrician" which includes many different programs, Cree participation through the TEHQ program alone is still nearly triple the rate of the rest of Quebec.[14]

While these figures are encouraging, employee retention has been an ongoing challenge in the years following the TEHQ program. By September 2019, 93 TEHQ graduates remained as permanent employees, a number which had dropped to 84 as of 2024. While this is still a significantly higher number than before the initiatives, the abrupt ending of the program in 2017 undoubtedly left clear gaps in retention, succession planning, and follow-up. A recommendation related to this gap has been included at the end of this report.

[11] Analysis of Electrician, Electronics and Instrumentation, and Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics job categories. From Canadian Apprenticeship Registrations and Certifications, Registered Apprentice Information System (RAIS), Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2020016-eng.htm>

[12] Based on Labour Force data for all of Quebec. Labour Force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted, Statistics Canada. Table: 14-10-0287-03.

[13] Based on Statistical Profile from the 2008 Cree Labour Market Survey <https://acee-ceaa.gc.ca/5D97CA58-docs/statistical_profile_2008-eng.pdf>

[14] For a similar analysis covering registrations, please refer to the Recruitment section of this report.

Key Performance Indicator #2: Graduation Rate

As examined in section 4.5.2, the overall graduation rate for TEHQ training programs was 63% for all programs and 66% for the DVS/DEP programs. This is more than double the graduation rate reported by the Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services and on par with the results reported amongst non-Cree students pursuing similar programs (full details can be found in section 4.5.2). This is made all the more impressive when one considers the tremendous challenges Cree students faced, including studying in their second or third language, moving away from their support systems, having limited educational background in math and science, and, often, raising families while in training.

The holistic and robust support network created by program organizers undoubtedly played a role in this success. Through services, support staff, and helpful policies, TEHQ programs were set up to help students to navigate a range of challenges: from moving into larger francophone cities from tight-knit Cree communities; to meeting the educational requirements to graduate from the program (including learning French); to managing the personal obligations and family needs of adult students with children. The TEHQ's graduation rates demonstrate how these types of services and support can make a difference for students.

Key Performance Indicator #3: Capacity Building Impact in Eeyou Istchee

While the target number of jobs was an important Key Performance Indicator (KPI), most Cree leaders saw meeting this 150 figure as secondary to the overall goal of capacity building in the Cree Nation. The various support measures put into place by the TEHQ program not only prepared many graduates for the rigours of working with Hydro-Québec, but also developed productive citizens who will ultimately contribute to the development of the Cree Nation as a whole.

This capacity building legacy extends beyond the eventual permanent employees, as every person who accessed any initaitive that resulted from the TEHQ program – from enrolees of prerequisites and French immersion programs, to graduates who ended up pursuing another fruitful career, to the children who continue to enjoy Elephant Thoughts and enhanced STEM education at CSB schools – continue to feel the benefits of this program, creating a legacy that both Hydro-Québec and the Cree Nation can build upon in the future.

While this wide-reaching impact may be difficult to fully measure, Cree School Board data on math and science levels and capacity may offer a glimpse into how STEM education has evolved since the TEHQ program began. A longitudinal study of program graduates, including those who chose a different career path than Hydro-Québec as well as those who only completed French immersion or prerequisite training, may also shed light on the capacity building impact of this program more broadly.

These main challenges, as well as other more specific areas of potential improvement, are summarized in the Recommendation section(s) of this report.

7.2 HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACTS

In addition to the overarching KPIs explored in the last section, the TEHQ program had the following impacts on the individuals, organizations, and communities involved:

- A life-changing opportunity for the 138 graduates. The lives of the 138 Crees who completed their program (and, in particular, the 122 who went on to be hired by Hydro-Québec) were profoundly impacted by this initiative. Many of those who started the TEHQ program had no previous diploma and faced limited career options in their communities. The TEHQ program allowed them to forge a new path forward: completing prerequisites and improving French skills, earning a diploma from high-quality and culturally aware training programs, and transitioning from training into sought-after career. By taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the TEHQ program, these determined students improved their own lives, bettered the financial situation of their families, and contributed to the economic well-being of their communities for the better.

  > "It changed my life by living differently than I lived in the community...it made me look at life in a different way. Adapting living in a small town. Adapting to a worker's way of life. It has me more responsible and independent." - *A TEHQ Graduate*

  > "Personally, I think that this is the best thing that has ever happened to me in my life so far." - *A TEHQ Graduate*

- **Access to training, including prerequisite and French immersion for many more.** In addition to the 138 students who graduated from TEHQ programs, there were several more students who attended some of the training and ultimately decided the TEHQ program was not for them. Notably, several made this decision after completing French Immersion and Prerequisite programs, earning credentials along the way despite not completing a full diploma. These individuals emerged with new skills that would support their success in the future, whether or not that future included employment at Hydro-Québec. The opportunity to upskill was an asset to the Cree Nation, especially for those in communities where French, Math, and Science adult education was not available at the time.

- **Improved relations between Hydro-Québec and the Cree Nation, including better hiring practices and working environments for Cree workers.** In envisioning the Cree Employment Agreement, Cree leaders and Hydro-Québec both understood the deep importance of positive relations between the two parties. Both were motivated to move towards a better and more collaborative future at the time of the TEHQ program, and many improvements were made as a result. This included revising of culturally biased hiring tests, developing a coaching program, and providing continued training in Cree culture to Hydro-Québec managers and employees. Furthermore, having dedicated staff at Hydro-Québec to support the integration of Cree workers, including identifying challenges as they arise and supporting the retention of the Cree workforce, is crucial to ongoing success.

Finally, this report represents another enduring legacy of the TEHQ program: **strengthening the Cree Nation's awareness, experience, and overall capacity in the area of training and career development**. The Niskamoon Corporation and its partners, both within the Cree Nation and outside of it, learned many valuable lessons while administering the TEHQ program. Indeed, this report aims to document these lessons for the benefit of future programs, so the success of the TEHQ program can be built upon moving forward.

In reflecting on these achievements, it is important to acknowledge the dedication of the staff behind the TEHQ program, who put so much care and effort into giving each student what they needed to be successful. Likewise, the hard work of students, high quality of teaching, and mutually beneficial partnerships with institutions should be roundly commended. The TEHQ program's success was truly the result of great effort on the part of many people, and there was strong motivation to get make programs available to as many trainees as possible within the Cree Employment Agreement timeframe. This no doubt helped to get TEHQ training programs off the ground very quickly and kept them going relatively successfully, despite the challenges faced along the way.

These lessons, which are detailed throughout this report are rooted equally in the program's achievements and the challenges.

7.3 CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the many positive impacts and general success related to the primary KPIs, the TEHQ program did have several gaps and challenges. These included:

- **Administrative and organizational challenges, especially as the program scaled.** The TEHQ programs were created quickly, with limited opportunity for strategic planning and, often, a lack of clarity and shared vision among staff and partners alike. As demand for the program increased and time went on, these issues became more pronounced. The lack of a strong organizational framework and management structure, especially during the period where the program was seeing the most growth, was a significant challenge for all involved.

- **Integration of graduates into Hydro-Québec.** Only 67% (93 out of 138) of TEHQ program graduates were in permanent positions at Hydro-Québec as of September 2019, raising questions about integration and retention of Cree employees once they complete their program. This has been the subject of numerous analyses, but the main overarching conclusion is that integration of a Cree minority into an overwhelmingly non-Cree workforce requires a suite of measures to ensure that new employees are integrated well and, most importantly, feel supported.

- **Follow-up and succession planning.** The desire, on both sides, for Crees to be well-represented in the Hydro-Québec workforce did not expire with the completion of the Cree Employment Agreement. However, without a provision for maintaining the number of Cree people in permanent jobs at the La Grande complex, this number will decline steadily over the years (due to retirement or other reasons). Without succession planning or follow-up programming, the gains made from the combined efforts will gradually erode over time, and rebuilding the necessary initiatives from scratch to respond to this eventuality would be costly.

Overall, while the motivation and forward momentum throughout the program was admirable, the sometimes hasty pace with which the program was built and executed contributed to many of the challenges as well. Decisions were sometimes made without the necessary expertise or overarching strategy, and meeting minutes and interviews with those who were present at the time indicate that this led to many issues: partnership and personnel roles were at times unclear, documentation could be disorganized, and there was little time or ability to be proactive rather than reactive. This is not uncommon for a program such as the TEHQ, where there is a limited timeframe within which to utilize funding and put students through training. It may be beneficial to look at the recommendations within this report when structuring future agreements as well as executing those agreements, as time and funding for planning and organization would be key to improving outcomes in future programs. Likewise, a long-term vision for employee retention and follow-up would be worth establishing early on to make the most of a future program like the TEHQ. The recommendations in the following section provides specific recommendations to this end.

7.4 LESSONS LEARNED

1 **Engage in Strategic Planning early and often:** Strategic Planning exercises proved extremely beneficial in later years of the TEHQ program; however, doing this work at the outset would have helped minimize some of the miscommunications and inefficiencies. Approximately one year of strategic planning before beginning a program such as this is recommended. This planning should clarify the following:

- Administration team roles and responsibilities.
- Partnership roles, responsibilities, information sharing and dispute resolution.
- Objectives and KPIs.
- Program evaluation plan.

2 **Consider a Partnerships Lead to oversee collaboration:** The role of partners (in particular, how the Cree School Board interacted with the Niskamoon Corporation and how the training institutions interacted with the Student Centre) was often unclear. Although strategic planning would mitigate some of these issues, a Partnership Lead would be highly beneficial in order to support these relationships and follow up on arrangements.

3 **Conduct research on job requirements and student profiles, and offer programs based on findings:** Program managers often found many people interested in the TEHQ training programs, but the difference between those who *wanted* to take a training program and those who *were qualified* to do so were at times stark. There were many reasons a person might not qualify for a training program, all of which could likely have been identified much earlier in the process:

- Academic prerequisites (many in the Cree Nation do not hold the prerequisites of a Secondary IV education).
- Having a driver's license in good standing.
- Physical ability related to performing the job properly (for example, ability to lift things in certain jobs, colour blindness for an electrician, etc.).

Another pitfall of missing the research step was that quotas for each program/job were not set. The strong focus on the goal of "150 permanent positions" led to the selection of training programs that led to higher-demand jobs, such as electricians and equipment mechanics, but did not fully account for the actual open roles at La Grande Complex. By 2002, all installations at the complex already had their staff in place, as Phase II had been completed nearly 10 years earlier. As a result, TEHQ programs ended up training more Electro-Mechanics than were needed at Hydro-Québec (and, likewise, training fewer people for jobs where there was a higher need); to this day, many TEHQ program graduates working at Hydro-Québec do not have an "official position," as they need to wait for a resignation or retirement to have an assigned role (see section 4.5 for more details on this challenge).

4 **Change management and program evaluation is an ongoing need:** The Joly report, an external review of TEHQ management and human resources completed in 2013, illuminated many program management issues and devised many helpful solutions for the TEHQ program. Having these insights earlier and on an ongoing basis could have prevented issues in areas such as internal communication and human resources, demonstrating the need for more work to be done in these areas in advance of starting a similar initiative.

5 **Filing systems, documentation, and KPI tracking are necessary:** The disorganization of files and data pertaining to the program became a significant challenge as the years went on. The appetite to move quickly resulted in filing systems being deprioritized, which led to challenges finding files and documents by Phase 3. For a program such as this to operate smoothly and to expand effectively, establishing a proper system for documentation and KPI tracking is key. A dedicated non-profit organization is necessary to implement this program. Although Niskamoon was generally successful with the program, the Corporation had many other responsibilities, so more dedicated attention may have been beneficial given the size of this file.

6 **Conduct a Cree-centric review of programs, assessments and systems:** The accomplishments related to the customization of the Centre Polymétier program, the Hydro-Québec French test, and the personality test all demonstrate the need for a Cree-centric review of any systems being used to train, hire and retain Cree workers. It is important to not only train Cree students, but to review the systems around them (such as those used for evaluation) to ensure they are culturally compatible. A willingness to adapt programs and services in response to findings is also critical; for example, it may be beneficial to add more work integration content to future training programs given the challenges that emerged at that stage.

7 **Develop a working group of individuals with training and development expertise to identify possible challenges and mitigate setbacks:** Initially, most people brought in to support the organization of this initiative were selected based on their authority in the Cree Nation, rather than their expertise in pedagogy, program management, and/or employment readiness. This resulted in some knowledge gaps and missed opportunities, which were only identified later when such subject matter experts joined the project. For example, funding was put in place to hire an extra Math teacher in Chisasibi, but they were unable to do so due to housing shortages. Language gaps and prerequisite issues were underestimated by the project team, and deadlines were at times unrealistic. These challenges may have been anticipated by people with experience in the education and training sector, therefore it would be advisable to consider these subject matter experts when forming committees for programs of this kind.

Key Takeaways from the Joly Report

The findings and recommendations in the Joly Report would be informative to anyone organizing a similar program in the future. The primary recommendations with regards to strategic planning were:

- Conduct a three-year strategic plan for the TEHQ program with the participation of all permanent employees of the Student Center and members of the Cree Training Coordinating Committee in Rouyn-Noranda. Include information gathered from partners and students about their needs and vision. Have the strategic plan adopted by the Niskamoon Board of Directors.
- Prepare an action plan each year to set out the objectives arising from the three-year plan and the operational objectives. Communicate this plan to the entire team and follow up on it. Have the annual plan adopted by the Training Coordination Committee.
- Have a statement of values and make sure everyone understands it and knows how to use it. Integrate this statement of values into the Code of Ethics.

8   Consider student realities and take action to support them: Leaving their communities to pursue education can often be challenging. Many students were living outside of the communities for the first time without basic knowledge of how to support themselves independently. Training-related stress were compounded by paying the rent, being away from family, and orientating themselves in a new city. The efforts made to support them through these challenges were vital and appreciated by the students and their families, and there was a clear correlation between the investment in student support measures and better training program outcomes.

9   Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of student support measures: While student support measures are key to success, there is still an important balance to strike between sufficiently supporting student success (through psycho-social support, financial incentives, and so on) and giving students the space and autonomy to succeed on their own terms, so they may be properly prepared for the subsequent steps in their professional journey. Ideally, program managers would regularly evaluate what is truly helping students versus what may be holding them back from developing life skills, and consider whether there may be more empowering ways to support students in certain cases. Such a reflection could help to ensure students are more empowered, equipped, and supported in the more effective ways.

10   Create a process for following up on recommendations and directives: While several great ideas and discussions emerged from planning meetings, many were not actionable at the outset. Having a method to revisit and follow up on these ideas could help ensure good ideas are not forgotten and prevent directives from being unintentionally dismissed.

11   Consider the whole family in program development and management: When a family member, especially a parent, pursues a job or training program, family structures are deeply impacted. Families are also the main support system for students, and their encouragement is critical to student success. In understanding this reality, Niskamoon provided an information session to students' spouses about Hydro-Québec's 8 days on/6 days off work schedules. This was well-received and supported student retention, indicating that more initiatives that involve the family unit could be helpful.

12   Consider ways to recruit women to technical training programs: If programs like this are to economically empower families and communities, both men and women need to have access to training and work opportunities – and in the case of the TEHQ program, this was certainly the case. In the final years of the program, more Cree women were enroled in these training programs as compared to similar programs in the rest of Quebec.

13   Steps to alleviate the stress of living away from the communities are worthwhile: Despite the job locations being on the territory, students were required to navigate the challenges of living away from their home communities as the specialized equipment and instructors for their intended programs were not available in Eeyou Istchee. As previously mentioned, for many Cree students, the stress of living far from their home communities was disruptive; common issues included managing parenting responsibilities in a new location (limited family support), culture shock, and difficulties maintaining secure housing. While offering these programs outside of Eeyou Istchee gave students access to specialized programs/instructors and a more immersive French language experience, dealing with these challenges added complexity for administrators and diverted students from their studies, leading some to leave the program despite being good candidates for the jobs. In the future,

it would be worthwhile to carefully review whether local training might be possible. If a program must take place outside of the communities, it is important to offer plentiful support to help students navigate the many challenges related to moving for their training program, especially with a family.

14 **Policies and dedicated resources are needed to provide individual attention to each student/worker:** While all TEHQ students were Cree, there was a wide variance in student readiness and needs (academic, social, emotional, and cultural). Each student faced their own realities and challenges, and many needed individualized attention to be successful. As such, there was a clear need for policies and resources related to student support, and more collaboration between those charged with helping students would have been beneficial. Likewise, proper communication channels between Hydro-Québec and Niskamoon would also make it easier to identify challenges and find solutions for Cree workers quickly. This type of support infrastructure would have prevented the Training and Employment Committee and director-level staff from needing to be involved in every issue, which was a significant challenge during this time.

15 **Build on lessons learned for a strong finish:** In the final phase, efforts were made to analyze how things were going and to make critical improvements, including bringing in a management consultant and reworking human resources for increased effectiveness. This demonstrates a commitment from the Niskamoon Corporation to always do the best job possible, no matter what phase of the mandate they were in. By not losing momentum and continuing to make improvements, year after year, students were able to consistently benefit from an increasingly effective program right to the end.

16 **Employers should make hiring and integration programs part of a larger reconciliation strategy:** The TEHQ program was built within a very specific context, and was deeply impacted by a difficult history and strained relations between Hydro-Québec and the Cree people (as well as between the province and the country and Indigenous peoples more broadly). It was important for the employer to understand the full scope of this context, appreciate the barriers that are and were faced by Cree people, and to approach training and hiring programs in the spirit of reconciliation. To this end, it is recommended that the employer created a formal reconciliation strategy that includes any hiring and integration program, rather than treating it as a standalone initiative. This can help to create a more aware and culturally safe environment for workers for the long-term, as well as clarifying for all involved why it is so important to support Cree people in securing permanent positions in hydro operations on their territory.

17 **Conduct a longitudinal study of TEHQ graduates:** At the outset of the Cree Employment Agreement, consulting firm Econotec went back and surveyed graduates from the FIMA program to understand their experiences, taking this into account when making recommendations for the future program. This data was very helpful in planning the TEHQ program, especially in identifying the barriers to employment after graduation. Any future program similar to the TEHQ program would benefit from a similar study.

7.5 LOOKING AHEAD: OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER INQUIRY

The year 2027 will mark ten years since the conclusion of the TEHQ program. Over that period, Hydro-Québec has remained committed to its goal of integrating Cree workers, and has captured a great deal of data on the employment journey of graduates as part of those efforts. This includes information about who left employment at Hydro-Québec, when, and why. These leads could be followed to gain more insight into how best to approach any future training programs. Some questions that would be very helpful to answer include:

- **How did the TEHQ program impact the lives of the students who completed part of the program but did not graduate? Are they using any of those skills or courses today?**

- **Do those who withdrew from the TEHQ programs and/or from work at Hydro-Québec still have interest in working for this employer?** The over 700 applicants to TEHQ programs indicates that interest was high at the outset; understanding how this interest could be reignited (for example, by offering more a diverse set of programs) would be helpful.

- **Are there any correlations between a student's training journey and their integration into work at Hydro-Québec?** For example, it would be helpful to know if having a less linear training path (re-enrolments, extensions) correlated with challenges integrating into work; and if so, if additional training or support could make a difference in these cases.

- **Are there any correlations between a student's language level entering the program and their integration into work at Hydro-Québec? Did those who experienced a longer French immersion program have better outcomes?** French language competency was a significant challenge many students needed to overcome in the TEHQ training programs, and learning more about how this played out long-term would be extremely helpful.

- **What was the impact of funding Cree students who did not meet the ten-year clause?** This was a unique aspect of the TEHQ program that, anecdotally, had a very positive impact; bringing Crees from different educational backgrounds together to learn from each other, and providing a pathway for Crees outside of the community to "come home" with a good job. It would be worth seeing if the latter intention played out long-term.

- **What was the long-term impact of the support services provided by the TEHQ program? Were there unintended consequences (either positive or negative)?**

In addition to following these important leads with regards to workplace integration, a longitudinal study could help us understand the broader impact of the TEHQ program. Since the end of the program, the Cree School Board has continued to evolve its math and science programming, building on initiatives such as Elephant Thoughts that originated from TEHQ program funding. Additionally, the 84 graduates who continue to work at Hydro-Québec, and may have influenced the educational and career decisions of those around them by sharing their own experiences. While investment made through this program has certainly left ripples in the communities, the extent of those impacts and how they have evolved over time has yet to be understood.

As time moves forward, TEHQ graduates have slowly begun to move on from their Hydro-Québec jobs. The natural course of retirements, career progressions, and changing circumstances make such a turnover inevitable. However, the desire for Crees to play an active role in the Hydro-Québec workforce remains as strong as ever. By better understanding the impacts of the TEHQ program and refining approaches to training and integration based on real experience and outcomes, it will be easier to target future programs and investments to ensure that this shared vision endures and expands.

08

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8 REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTNERS

- APATISIIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (FORMERLY KNOWN AS CREE HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT) OF THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT
- ATELIERS ALPHA (FRENCH LANGUAGE TRAINING)
- CARLETON UNIVERSITY
- CÉGEP ANDRÉ-LAURENDEAU
- CÉGEP DE JONQUIÈRE
- CÉGEP DE L'ABITIBI -TÉMISCAMINGUE
- CÉGEP DE L'OUTAOUAIS
- CÉGEP DE MAISONNEUVE
- CÉGEP DE SAINT-LAURENT
- CÉGEP DU VIEUX-MONTRÉAL
- CÉGEP HERITAGE COLLEGE
- CÉGEP ST-LAURENT
- CENTRE D'ÉDUCATION DES ADULTES ÉLIZABETH-BRUYÈRE
- CENTRE D'IMMERSION FRANÇAISE DE STE-HYACINTHE
- CENTRE DE FORMATION HARRICANA
- CENTRE DE FORMATION PROFESSIONALLE DE LA JAMÉSIE
- CENTRE DE FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE DE LA BAIE-JAMES
- CENTRE DE FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE HARRICANA
- CENTRE DE FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE POLYMÉTIER
- CENTRE ELIZABETH-BRUYÈRE
- CENTRE LINGUISTIQUE DE JONQUÈRE
- CENTRE POLY-MÉTIER DE ROUYN-NORANDA
- COMMISSION SCOLAIRE DE LA BAIE-JAMES
- COMMISSION SCOLAIRE DE ROUYN-NORANDA
- COMMISSION SCOLAIRE HARRICANA
- CREE HEALTH BOARD AND SOCIAL
- CREE SCHOOL BOARD
- ÉCOLE DE LANGUE SAINT-HYACINTHE
- ELEPHANT THOUGHTS
- CÉGEP HERITAGE COLLEGE
- HYDRO-QUÉBEC
- MICHEL CHRÉTIEN, ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANT
- POUR PARLER (ORIENTATION PROGRAM)
- UQAT: UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC EN ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE
- UQO: UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC EN OUTAOUAIS
- VOL DU COLIBRI (DAYCARE)

TECHNICAL EMPLOYMENT WITH HYDRO-QUÉBEC (TEHQ) PROGRAM POLICY

September 2015

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NB The Niskamoon Corporation hereby expressly reserves its right to alter, modify, suspend, or add changes to the present Policy from time to time.

I. OBJECTIVES

As per Section 5.2 of the Eeyou Apatisiiwin Niskamoon/Cree Employment Agreement, Niskamoon Corporation shall design, develop, approve, manage and implement the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) Program.

The overall goal of Niskamoon Corporation's Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) Program is to provide Hydro-Québec with a minimum of 150 qualified Crees for the following Permanent Positions within the James Bay Region, by March 31st, 2017:

- Automation Electronics Technicians;

- Telecommunications Technicians;

- Apparatus Electricians;

- Apparatus mechanics

The TEHQ Program objectives also aim to:

- Offer Crees training programs that lead to the required qualifications in said respective disciplines of study;

- Provide training to Crees that leads them to meet the Hydro-Québec hiring requirements;

- Facilitate Cree enrolment in all targeted training programs;

- Support and encourage successful completion of training programs;

- Underline merit and recognize Niskamoon DEP and DEC level students who pursue success in their training programs;

- Foster individual responsibility;

- Further support the measures aimed at providing Hydro-Québec a minimum of 150 qualified Cree people to work in the James Bay Area.

II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. FUNDING OF ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Niskamoon Corporation shall fund additional measures for students attending in the following training programs, based on proposals submitted by partnering institutions recognized and accredited by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec (MELSQ):

- Industrial Electronics in Instrumentation and Automation (3-year DEC program);

- Electronics technology in Telecommunications/Computers (3-year DEC program);

- Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics (2-year DEP program);

- Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics (2-year DEP program).

Such additional measures include:

- Overhead costs associated with program preparation activities, such as design and development of customized programs activities;

- Additional institutional costs for small customized group costs;

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Such additional measures include:

- Overhead costs associated with program preparation activities, such as design and development of customized programs activities;

- Additional institutional costs for small customized group costs;

Niskamoon Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec Program Policy   September 2015

- Additional institutional academic support measures for students, such as tutoring and counseling services;

- Other institutional support measures as approved by Niskamoon Corporation.

All of the above fields of study must meet the Hydro-Québec Hiring Requirements as per the Cree Employment Agreement and the training needs of its Cree students.

2. FUNDING OF FRENCH LANGUAGE, PREREQUISITES AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

Niskamoon Corporation recognizes that a small population of its potential target labour pool is proficient in the French language and that this significant portion of interested candidates needs to acquire or improve its knowledge of and/or fluency in French so as to properly follow any one of its TEHQ training programs. Consequently, the Corporation shall fund or partially fund the following French language training programs for its approved candidates.

2.1 French Immersion Program

All new applicants who are not proficient in the French language are required to pass the French Immersion Program prior to being admitted into the TEHQ training program of their choice in order to be adequately prepared to follow it. This program also includes a *French as a Second Language* (FSL) course.

2.2 Prerequisites Training Program

Given the fact that many interested applicants demonstrate a need to upgrade their Math and Sciences education in order to meet the academic requirements needed to enroll in one or the other of its regular TEHQ training programs, Niskamoon Corporation shall also fund or partially fund a prerequisites training program, to be provided in a francophone environment.

Such program shall meet the approved candidates' language training needs and also adequately prepare them for long-term academic commitments with respect to cross-cultural and socio-academic challenges.

The students enrolled in the prerequisites training program are awarded one full year to complete their prerequisites.

2.3 Summer Orientation Program

Niskamoon approved students shall be entitled to receive a weekly allowance in so far as their student file and attendance remain in good standing.

This provision is described in Annex A of this policy and subject to the Attendance Policy (Annex B).

2.4 Niskamoon Summer Student Employment Program

The purpose of the Niskamoon Summer Student Employment Program is to support and encourage the development of students' employment skills in their respective program of study.

Each summer student salary is subsidized up to a maximum hourly subsidy of $17.00, including vacation pay and all other usual employer costs and fringe benefits. This employer subsidy is payable upon receipt of the employer's invoices up to thirty-five (35) hours per week, for a maximum of twelve (12) weeks.

Niskamoon DEP and DEC returning students and Prerequisites Training Program graduates who are enrolled in a Niskamoon DEP or DEC program for the immediately following year are eligible to participate in this program. The student must enroll by providing his/her name to the designated person at the Student Centre by May 1st.

Enrolled students who secure or are placed into a summer employment opportunity with an approved employer shall also benefit from the Niskamoon Summer Student Equivalent Sponsorship referred to in Section 3.2.3 for the duration of their summer employment.

3.   SUPPORT MEASURES FOR NISKAMOON STUDENTS

Niskamoon Corporation acknowledges that its students may require additional support measures that respond to their socio-academic and economic needs, mostly due to cross-cultural impediments. Therefore, the Corporation shall provide or fund the following support measures.

These support measures are implemented for purposes of meeting the following objectives:

- To recognize and reward student academic achievements;
- To further encourage and support those students who demonstrate success in their training programs;
- To facilitate and foster a sense of team effort towards the endeavour of pursuing permanent employment with Hydro-Québec.

In order to be eligible for an incentive, students must successfully complete a semester in one of the disciplines referred to in Section 1 of this Policy.

3.1   INCENTIVES

3.1.1   Student Monthly Monetary Incentive

Niskamoon Corporation acknowledges that given the overall Niskamoon student profiles, students encounter financial constraints that unduly affect academic performance during the course of their studies. Therefore, the Corporation shall provide a monthly monetary incentive for each DEP and DEC level Niskamoon student at the middle of each month while at program of study. Each DEP or DEC student is entitled to a minimum monthly amount, increasing proportionately with each additional dependant, according to the terms set out in Annex A.

Niskamoon DEP and DEC level students shall be entitled to receive this monetary incentive for the equivalent duration of their studies to those in similar regular programs and more specifically in so far as their academic file and attendance remain in good standing. In case of an unjustified absence, this allowance will be reduced according to the percentages table displayed in Annex A.

The Student Monthly Monetary Incentive is also subject to the Attendance Policy as described in Annex B.

3.1.2   Incentive for Successful Session for DEP Students

An incentive of $500.00 shall be rewarded to DEP program students who have successfully passed all their classes for each session of their 2-year program of studies.

In order to receive this incentive, the student must fill out an application form by March 1st for the fall session and by August 30th for the winter session, and submit appropriate supporting documents to the Student Centre for approval and processing.

3.1.3   Incentive for Successful Session for DEC Students

An incentive of $1000.00 shall be rewarded to all DEC program students who have successfully passed all their courses for each semester of their 3-year program of studies.

In order to receive this incentive, the student must fill out an application form by March 1st for the fall session and by August 30th for the winter session and submit appropriate supporting documents to the Student Centre for approval and processing.

3.1.4 Incentive for Permanent Employment with Hydro-Québec

- #### *DEP Students*

Uponsuccessful completion of the DEP program and upon successful completion of his/her probationary periodat Hydro-Québec, a Niskamoon graduate is entitled to receive a graduation award in the amount $3000.00.

Graduates must send in their award requests with a confirmation letter from Hydro-Québec attesting to theirsuccessful probation period and a copy of their Diploma to the Director for Training & Employment.

- #### *DEC Students*

Uponsuccessful completion of the DEC program and upon successful completion of his/her probationary periodat Hydro-Québec, a Niskamoon graduate is entitled to receive a graduation award in the amount $5000.00.

Graduates must send in their award requests with a confirmation letter from Hydro-Québec attesting to their successful probation period and a copy of their Diploma to the Director for Training & Employment.

3.2 SPONSORSHIPS

3.2.1 Niskamoon Equivalent Sponsorship

All TEHQ Program students may benefit from the Niskamoon Monthly Equivalent Sponsorship Program with a single student rate, increasing with each additional dependant, in conformity with the CSB established rates.

Niskamoon approved sponsored students shall be entitled to receive this monthly Equivalent Sponsorship for the equivalent duration of their studies to those in similar regular programs and more specifically in so far as their academic file and attendance remain in good standing.

3.2.2 Niskamoon Equivalent Sponsorship for Prerequisites Training Program

Niskamoon Students enrolled in the Prerequisites Training Program shall receive a monthly equivalent sponsorship for the duration of their studies. A monthly single student will benefit from the Equivalent Sponsorship Program with a single student rate, increasing proportionately with each additional dependant.

Niskamoon approved sponsored students shall be entitled to receive this monthly Equivalent Sponsorship in so far as their academic file and attendance remain in good standing.

3.2.3 Niskamoon Summer Student Equivalent Sponsorship

Niskamoon Corporation acknowledges that given the overall student profiles, where the majorities have dependants, economic and housing needs cause financial strains during the summer period when student income support levels are below that of their financial obligations and economic needs.

Given the above, a Niskamoon Summer Student Equivalent Sponsorship will be provided to a Niskamoon Summer Student once the Cree School Board Post Secondary Student Services has provided the student with the Summer Rent payment. The student must then fill out the Summer Student Equivalent Sponsorship Form to receive the balance of their allowance received during the Academic Year.

Itis the student's responsibility to apply for summer rent.

3.2.4   Equivalent Sponsorship for Graduates within Hydro-Québec's Hiring Process

During the transitory period following the obtaining of their diploma and preceding their effective employment with Hydro-Québec, TEHQ Program graduates are entitled to continue receiving the Equivalent Sponsorship for the duration of the hiring process.

3.3   OTHER NISKAMOON STUDENT MEASURES

3.3.1   Childcare Allowance

All Students whom benefit from the Equivalent Sponsorship Programs and the Mandatory French Immersion Program may benefit from the Childcare Allowance Program.

Niskamoon approved students shall be entitled to Child Care costs for dependent children under the age of 14. The student is subsidized on a cost recovery basis in accordance to Table 2.

In order to receive this benefit, the student must fill out the Child Care Claim (available at the Student Centre) with signed receipts from the Child Care provider.

3.3.2   Cree Cultural Leave

Niskamoon Corporation recognizes and supports its students who wish to practice their Cree traditional activities, in conformity with their academic calendar. As such, student travel shall be provided for this purpose to and from the student's point of origin.

More specifically, the student is entitled to one (1) travel claim for said activity for each year of program studies. In order to be eligible for this benefit, the student must submit his/her Travel Request Form (available at the Student Centre), at least six (6) weeks prior to the actual travel dates, to the concerned Student Life Animator.

Only those students affected by travel emergencies will be considered for travel change requests after the 6-week deadline has passed. In all other cases, all travel arrangements and schedules will be strictly enforced.

3.3.3   Niskamoon Student Activity Funds

Niskamoon Corporation acknowledges the importance of positive social and academic experiences by providing a supportive integration environment into urban and student life. In view of reducing some negative impacts of sudden life-style changes combined with the pressures of academic achievements for the majority of its students and to encourage socio-cultural adaptation and to support adjustments to a francophone culture, students shall be entitled to a yearly activity fund for purposes of socio-cultural and recreational activities.

Yearly rates entitlements are according to Niskamoon Corporation and final approval must be obtained from the Director for Training & Employment.

3.3.4   Reimbursement for Driving Lessons

Niskamoon Corporations recognizes that it is a Hydro-Québec hiring requirement to hold a valid driver's license, and also acknowledges the lack of driving lessons providers and instructors within the Cree communities.

A Niskamoon student is entitled to a reimbursement of a maximum amount representing 75% of the total cost incurred for course registration, class fees and practical courses for driving lessons, conditional that the student hold a valid driver license before graduating from their program. The cost incurred for driving lessons prior to the admission in the TEHQ program are not eligible for reimbursement.

3.3.5 Purchase of Niskamoon Corporation Jackets

A Niskamoon vocational or technical program student is eligible for one Niskamoon Corporation jacket that bears its logo. Niskamoon will provide a maximum amount of $300.00 for each student who applies for this incentive, on a one-time basis.

In order to receive this incentive, the student must provide his/her name to the Student Life Animator by October 1st.

4. STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Niskamoon Student is responsible for his/her academic success and as such is responsible to seek additional assistance when and if needed.

4.1 Entitlement

The Niskamoon TEHQ Program students may benefit from the provisions as set out in this policy in so far as they have satisfactorily demonstrated their rightful entitlement to these benefits and measures and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the TEHQ Program Policy.

4.2 Dismissal and Readmission

In the case of a student being dismissed from the program, he/she may still apply to one of the TEHQ programs in the course of the same year once he/she has provided satisfactory proof from a qualified professional that he/she is adequately and competently able to follow a rigorous training program.

In order to be re-admitted to the TEHQ program, the student must submit a new application request in conformity with the eligibility criteria and undergo further academic and linguistic evaluations from the competent experts before eventually receive approval from the Director for Training & Employment. Ifthe

dismissal was caused by a disciplinary issue, a student readmission is at the Niskamoon Training & Employment Committee discretion.

4.3 Harassment Prohibition

All Students must refrain from using of abusive, defamatory, hateful, discriminatory, sexist or indecent in communications and messages with private or public persons physical or moral, or use internet and other media to harass or threaten.

Students remain responsible for damages caused to others, whether they are bodily, moral or material, and must bear the consequences related to the repair of such damages. Any person contravening the TEHQ Program Policy shall be liable, in addition to the penalties provided by law, to the following sanctions:

- cancellation of rights of access to equipment and services covered by this Policy;
- repayment of any sum that the Student Centre would be obliged to pay the following unauthorized use, fraudulent or illegal use of its services or information technology (IT) assets and telecommunications;
- reimbursement of costs incurred by the Student Centre for work and replacement of stolen or damaged parts;
- disciplinary or other sanctions under the rules of the Student Centre, or imposed in accordance with collective bargaining agreements and protocols.

4.4 Information Technology Use

Students must use the IT resources for strictly academic purposes, and are entitled to their privacy in doing so. However, system faults or design errors can compromise privacy, and therefore the Students

agree that the authorized personnel can access, during maintenance or search for system problems, the data and software stored in the Student Centre computer resources. Students must also accept that the authorized personnel may take appropriate measures to ensure the integrity of computer resources and to ensure that the TEHQ Program Policy is observed.

4.5   Consent to Use of Name and Picture

Students who benefit from this Program provide the Niskamoon Corporation and the Cree School Board with the right to use their names and pictures for purposes of newsletters, reports, and any other program promotional and advertising purposes. Should students not wish to be part of the aforementioned, they must write a letter to their Student Life Animator indicating that they do not consent to any publicity by October 1st.

ANNEX A: RATES

Table 2.3 : Niskamoon Student Weekly Allowance for Summer Orientation Program

Number of Dependants	Weekly Rates
No Dependant	$ 175.00
1 Dependant	$ 200.00
2 Dependants	$ 225.00
3 Dependants	$ 250.00
4 Dependants	$ 275.00
5 Dependants	$ 300.00
6 Dependants	$ 325.00

Table 3.1.1 – Student Monthly Monetary Incentive1

Dependants	Incentive
No dependant	$875.00
Dependant (Spouse)	$136.00
Dependants (Children)	$144.00

Table 3.1.1(B) – Student Monthly Monetary Incentive – Allowance %

Attendance Hours Required %	Allowance %
100 %	110 %
99-95 %	100 %
94-90 %	90 %
89-85 %	80 %

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[1] Dependants allowance will be reviewed annually on July 1st, in accordance with the current Cree School Board Post Secondary Student Services rates.

84-80 %	65 %
79-75 %	50 %
74-70 %	35 %
69 & Less	0 %

Table 3.2.1 – Niskamoon Equivalent Sponsorship2

Dependants	*Living allowance*
No dependant	$1348.00
Dependant (Spouse)	$136.00
Dependants (Children)	$144.00

Table 3.2.2 – Niskamoon Equivalent Sponsorship for Prerequisites Training

Dependants	*Living allowance (CSBPSSS)*
No dependant	$1348.00
Dependant (Spouse)	$136.00
Dependants (Children)	$144.00

Table 3.3.1: Childcare Weekly Allowance Rates3

Number of Children	**Weekly Rates**
1 child	$ 150.00
2 children	$ 175.00
3 or more children	$ 200.00

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[2] The Childcare Weekly Allowance will be reviewed annually on July 1st, in accordance with the current Cree School Board rates.

[3] Niskamoon reserves its right to adjust these rates to accommodate students facing exceptional situations.

ANNEX B: ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. STATEMENT

The Niskamoon Corporation fosters student responsibility and promotes that student success also rests on a good attendance record and good academic standing which in turn produces desirable working habits as sought by employers.

It is mandatory to fully attend all the scheduled classes during the course of every TEHQ training program.

However, a student may be absent for of parental/childcare responsibility, bereavement, medical or legal reasons.

Students are required to provide supporting documents from the concerned professionals attesting to the reasons stated for their absence and it is the student's responsibility to provide such authentication on the day of his/her return to class. For example, a justified absence constitutes a doctor's or childcare provider's note or a motivated absence from the training institution or the Student Life Animator.

In the absence of a supporting document, such absence shall be considered as unjustified and subject to the appropriate sanction.

Any absence not enumerated above as a justified absence shall be considered as unjustified.

2. PROCEDURE FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAM STUDENTS

According to terms and conditions of Section 3.1.1 of the TEHQ Program Policy, the monthly incentive awarded to students in the vocational and technical programs are granted on the basis of a good attendance record.

In order to implement this Section, the following attendance policy and mechanisms shall be applicable:

a. In the case of an unjustified lateness of less than one (1) hour, a student will be deducted $25.00 from the monthly incentive;

b. All unjustified lateness and absences shall be cumulative for each month;

c. Students may not contest or question the attendance records after they have been received by the persons responsible for administering the Student Monthly Incentive. It is the students' responsibility to approach their teachers with their justifications prior to the attendance records' release.

Each beginning of the month, the training institution forward the attendance records of the previous month for the Niskamoon Corporation students to the persons responsible for administering the Niskamoon Student Monthly Incentives. The recipient of this information shall proceed to implement the deductions on the immediately following monthly incentives.

3. PROCEDURE FOR THE PREREQUISITES TRAINING PROGRAM STUDENTS

According to the terms and conditions of Section 3.2.2 of the TEHQ Program Policy, the monthly living allowance is awarded to students in the prerequisites training programs on the basis of good academic standing as well as on a good attendance record.

Given that this allowance provides for a basic living allowance, the attendance policy shall provide the following attendance incentive in the following manner:

a) In the case of the student who attends a minimum of 90% of his/her classes he/she shall be awarded an incentive amount of $100.00 per month for a good attendance record;

b) In the case of an unjustified lateness of less than one (1) hour, a student will be deducted $25.00 from the monthly incentive;

c) All unjustified lateness and absences shall be cumulative for each month;

d) Students may not contest or question the attendance records after they have been received by the persons responsible for administering the Student Monthly Incentive. It is the students' responsibility to approach their teachers with their justifications prior to the attendance records' release.

It is the responsibility of the training institution to qualify justified absences in accordance with their attendance policies and as per the spirit of this policy.

The training institutions shall provide monthly absence reports at the beginning of each month to the proper TEHQ Program competent authority as determined at the beginning of each year.

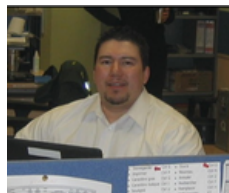## 4. PROCEDURE FOR SUMMER ORIENTATION PROGRAM STUDENTS

As per the terms and conditions of Section 2.3 of the TEHQ Program Policy, the Weekly Allowances provided to students in the Summer Orientation Program aregranted on the basis of a good attendance record.

However, in the event that a student deviates from the policy,the following shall apply in the calculation of the Weekly Allowance:

a. For each unjustified absence, an amount equalto35% of his/her weekly allowance shall be deducted from the weekly allowance;

b. In the case of two (2) cumulative unjustifiedabsences, an amount equivalent to 60% shall be deducted from his/her weekly allowance;

c. In the case of three (3) unjustified absences,thetotal weekly allowance shall be deducted and the student shall be dismissed from the program;

d. In all cases, justified or unjustified absences,allabsences shall be cumulative for each week.

It is the responsibility of the training institution toqualifyjustified absences in accordance with their policies and with this attendance policy.

The training institution shall directly and immediatelyimplement the deductions on the weekly allowance.