

# Report: Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan (NSEP)



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Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan

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## =====SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW =====

### 1.0 Introduction and Overview

#### 1.1 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all those who contributed to this release, Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG), Director of Programs and Services, Villages, Urban locals (Terrace and Prince Rupert/Port Edward), Labour Market Coordinator, Videographer, and Surveyors. Most of all we must acknowledge the most important contributors to this report – the respondents to the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Survey. Our sincere gratitude is extended to these respondents. This report would not have been possible without their co-operation.

#### How Did We Do?

We invite your feedback on all publications produced by Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee

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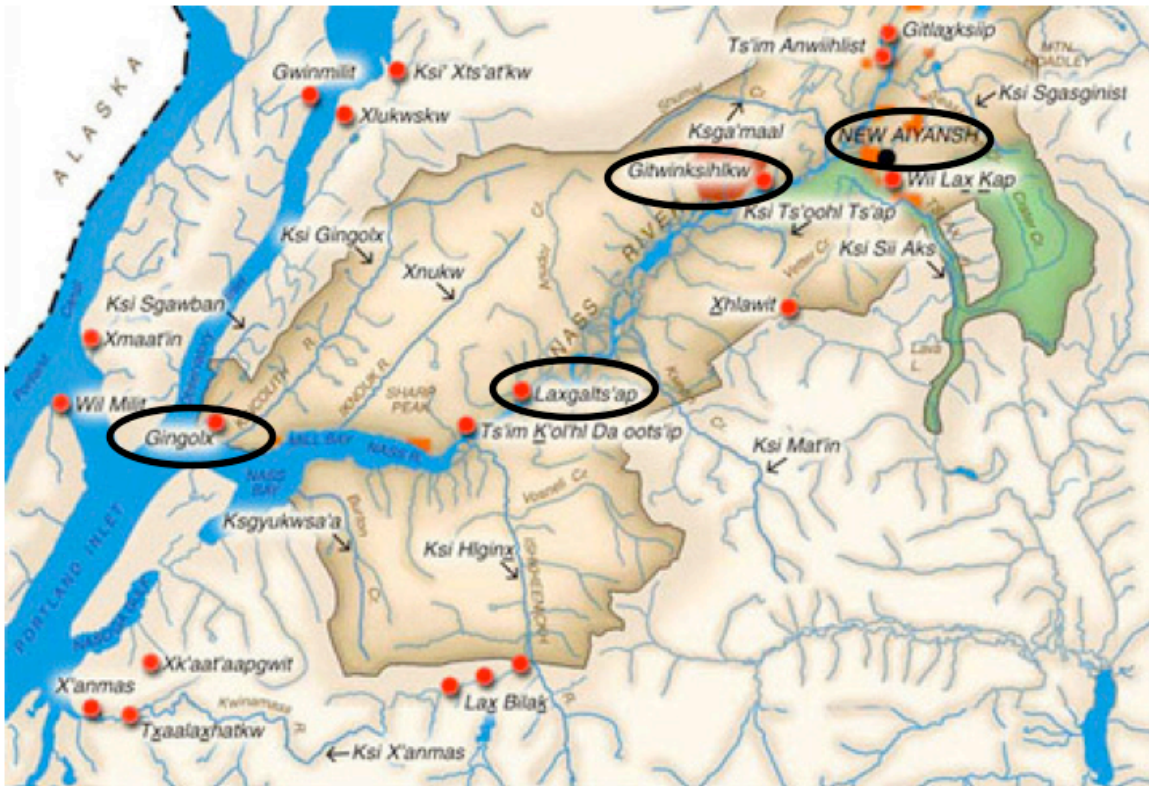
This document may be freely quoted and reproduced without the written consent of Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee providing there are no changes made to the text or content and the Nisga'a Lisims Government is acknowledged as the author of the document.

Nisga'a Lisims Government recognizes potential limitations of report content and is committed to ongoing research to enhance local labour market planning in the Nass Valley.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Nisga'a' Lisims Government.

## Nass Area Map





## Nisga'a Names - Lower Portion

### Legend



Nisga'a Lands



► Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park



Gingietl Creek Ecological Reserve No. 115



## Legend



Excluded Areas From Nisga'a Lands

### 1.2 Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee Endorsement

As members of the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee, we are pleased to present the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan 2011-2015 ... Our People Our Prosperity. We are honoured with the opportunity to undertake this important initiative, particularly given the urgency prompted by the significant economic downturn experienced across many communities during this current global recession.

We recognize that the task before us is not simple, for local planning systems change is not without challenges. In essence, we are looking at a complex system that is built and driven by inter-relationships and inter-connections. It is these relationships and connections that can forge a movement to propel the actions recommended throughout this report. This plan informs the Nisga'a Nation's response for labour market support, system integration and information access. It strengthens our Nation's ability to develop, train and retain a strong, resilient workforce.

The commitment to this process was strengthened through partnership, collaboration, information sharing and our collective vision. Nisga'a Sustainable



Employment Plan 2012-2017 ... Our People Our Prosperity belongs to the Nisga'a People, not to this committee or any single organization. It is OUR plan, as citizens, employees, employers, business owners, community-based service providers, government leaders and administrators, educators, trainers and residents of this region. This plan humbly recognizes all the past work done in this area and strives to enhance the economic progress of the Nisga'a Nation by providing stakeholders and decision makers with the resources, information and tools to ensure a quality labour supply that can respond to labour market demand stimulated by economic growth.

Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan 2012-2017 ... Our People Our Prosperity represents the collaborative efforts of the community as represented by the ad-hoc Steering Committee. It was created with the assistance and support of the British Columbia Provincial Government and the Nisga'a Lisims Government.

We encourage you to think about the discussion points captured here and explore how you might influence and support necessary changes to help OUR Nation achieve its collective vision – a vision proclaiming that Nisga'a Nation has a common, innovative labour market strategy that supports a skilled, knowledgeable and resilient talent pool for a competitive leading edge economy.

Director of Programs & Services, NLG

Economic Development Officer, NLG

Project Consultant



Labour Market Research Coordinator

Chairperson of Council of Elders, NLG

Youth Organizing Youth Rep, NLG

Gitlaxtaamiks Village Government

Village of Gitwinksihlkw

Laxgalts'ap Village Government

Gingolx Village Government

Terrace Nisga'a Society, Terrace

Nisga'a Valley Health Authority,

School District #92,

Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute,

Nisga'a Commercial Group,

Greenville Enterprises Ltd.,

### 1.3 Executive Summary

The Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan 2012-2017 ... Our People, Our Prosperity will provide stakeholders and decision makers with the resources,





information and tools to ensure a quality labour supply that can respond to demand stimulated by economic growth. This is an important initiative, especially given the significant economic downturn experienced across many communities during this current global recession. However, this task is not simple since change is not without challenge, especially considering labour market systems are built and driven by complex inter-connections and relationships. Nonetheless, it is these relationships and connections that can forge a movement to propel the actions recommended throughout this plan. This is critical because the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan is OUR plan, belonging not to a single organization or institution, but every citizen and stakeholder of the Nisga'a Nation.

The Nisga'a Valley is rich with natural beauty and resources, enjoys a swiftly improving infrastructure, and is inhabited by a strong, proud people who have not only maintained their culture and identity but possess a Treaty enabling over 11 years of self-government. However, despite these incredible assets, unemployment rates in the Nass Valley have historically been unacceptably higher than the national average, as a result of limited opportunities based on economic and seasonal factors in conjunction with inadequate education, relevant training and skills. Therefore, industry and governments cannot plan for the future when on multiple levels the local labour market is in question. Uncertainty creates indecision that impacts the growth of the Nisga'a economy.

Consequently the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee has assumed the task of creating and implementing this sustainable market labour plan. The scope required for the plan entails a comprehensive focus on 4 major labour market areas in the Nass Valley: (1) Recognize current and future needs. (2) Inventory current capacity. (3) Identify existing labour market gaps. (4) Map a



plan of action.

This plan is grounded in community input and knowledge, as well as statistical and industry evidence that supports detailed strategies and associated action policies. Approximately 800 Nisga'a citizens were surveyed, at random, throughout all 4 Nisga'a Villages and 2 urban locals to assess the current and projected employment, health and wellness, housing, cultural and educational condition of the Nass. Moreover, the analysis of survey results was complemented by information collected from supplementary sources of data including key industry and community organization interviews, statistics, and open town hall meetings and focus groups held at each Nisga'a Village and 2 urban locals.

Three themes developed from the analysis that, as a whole, represent the overall vision required for sustainable economic growth and a prosperous Nisga'a Nation - labour market forecasting and information, development of workforce and workplace, and retention and attraction of Nisga'a people to the Nass Valley. A four-part strategy emerged; designed to address these three overarching themes as a series of interconnected steps:

(1) "Community and Culture", enhancing the quality of life in the Nisga'a Villages to strengthen the existing workforce and draw emigrant Nisga'a into the Valley, support local economic initiatives, and attract entrepreneurs and investment from beyond the Nass. (2) "Communication & Coordination", providing relevant, quality and timely labour market information to make informed decisions regarding labour market in the Nass Valley. (3) "Programs & Services", to support the envisioned labour market change, ensuring opportunities are available for all Nisga'a citizens for effective, efficient training to enhance their skills, knowledge, and ultimately life experience. (4) "Career & Fulfillment", is aimed at creating a

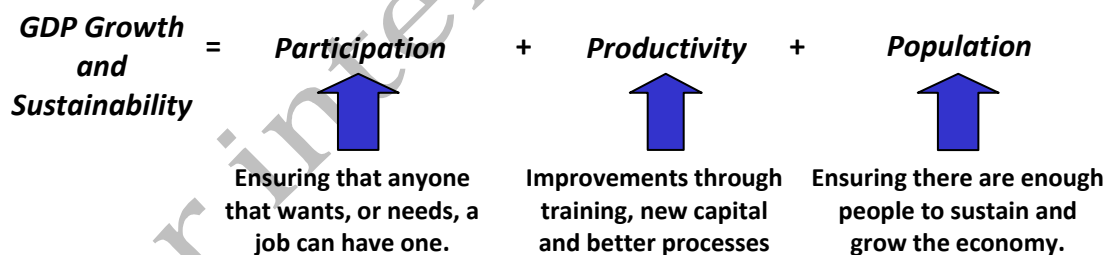


support system that fosters a culture of individual fulfillment and learning among employers to attract and retain skilled Nisga'a. Each of the sections present the relevant research findings that give the strategy its relevance, and provide practical, specific action plans to bring the strategy to a reality.

## 1.4 Strategies and Actions Summary

The Nisga'a Nation is rich with natural and cultural resources, enjoys a rapidly improving infrastructure, and a Treaty that has enabled over 11 years of self-government. However, these assets alone do not create prosperity.

Sustainability and growth are dependent on people, their knowledge and their abilities.



On one hand, unemployment often affects the personal development and self-identity of individual citizens. Employment rates in the Nass Valley have

historically been higher than the national average.

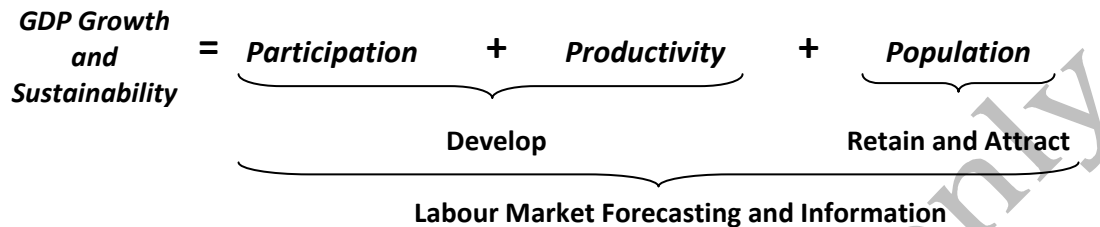
On the other hand, labour shortages create uncertainty in the marketplace. Multiple companies representing major industries have expressed interest in doing business in the Nass Valley. Industry and governments cannot plan for the future when the availability of one of the most important assets to production is in question. Uncertainty creates indecision that impacts the growth of the economy in the Nass Valley and ultimately the Nisga'a Nation. A path to prosperity requires addressing labour market challenges immediately.

Strategic planning is the process of defining where the Nisga'a Nation wants to go and how to get there. The following recommended set of themes, objectives and strategic initiatives ensure sustainable economic growth in the Nations, create a well-educated workforce that is representative of the population, improve the level of competitiveness of businesses, and promote and enhance the quality of life for all citizens, present and future, of the Nisga'a Nation. The recommendations are the result of targeted consultation and research on the current state of Nisga'a labour market, and critical review by industry, government, and other institutional leaders. It is the responsibility of all parties to act on these strategies for full effectiveness.

The Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan... Our People Our Prosperity 2012-2017 is guided by three high level themes, aimed at creating a labour market that supports sustainable economic growth and a prosperous Nisga'a Nation. These themes represent the overall vision and desired outcomes for the Nation, where industry, government and post-secondary institutions play an integral role in the Nation's future success. Fulfilling the strategy requires concentrated efforts on labour market forecasting and information, development of the Nisga'a workforce



and workplace, and retention and attraction of Nisga'a people to the Nass Valley.

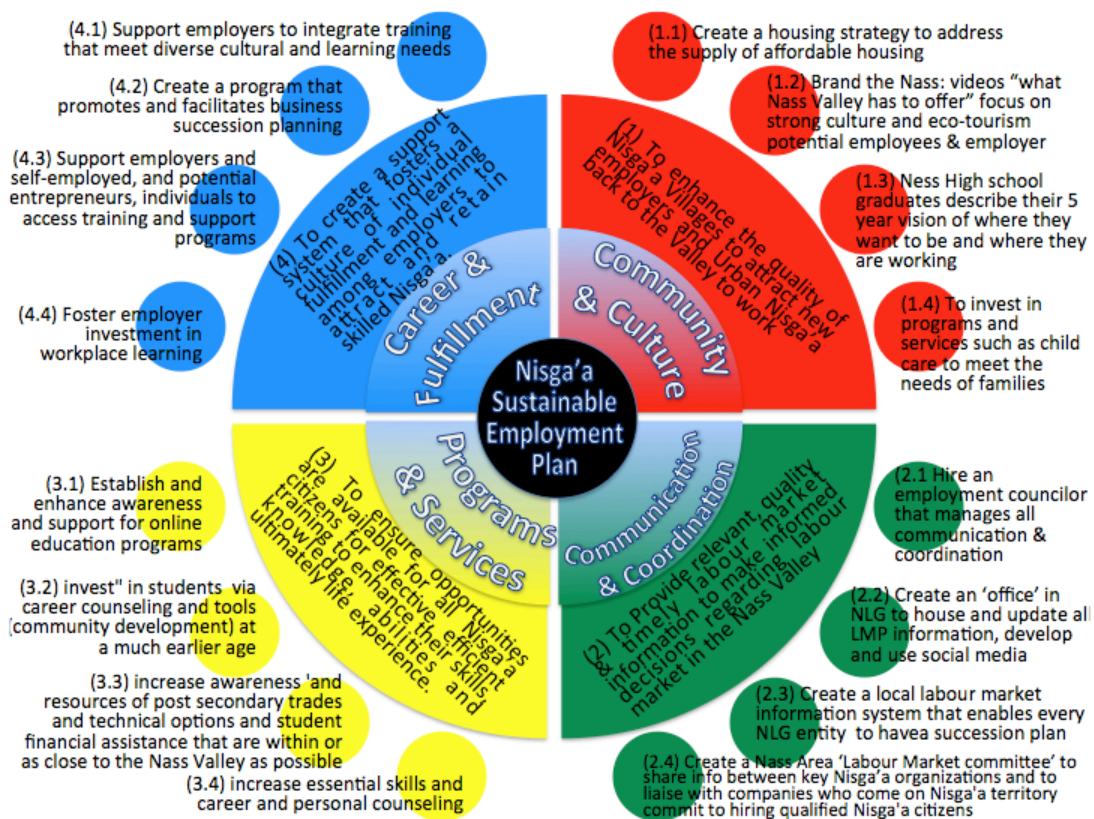


The strategy should not be viewed as a list of separate activities, but as a series of inter-connected steps, each playing a key role in shaping the future of the Nisga'a Nation. Furthermore, these themes overlap in scope, implying that achievement in one area can also assist in the achievement of another.

### 1.5 NSEP 2012-2017 ... See the Vision and Acting on it (the Model)

Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan's vision is modeled below, flowing from inside the wheel outwards. The innermost area depicts the four strategic areas of focus, followed by their respective goals and desired outcomes, and finally the action plans that support the achievement of each strategy. As an integrated whole, these priorities, strategies and actions address this plan's three overarching themes - labour market forecasting, development of workforce and workplace, and retention of Nisga'a people in the Nass Valley - required for sustainable economic growth and a prosperous Nisga'a Nation.





## 1.6 Report Structure

Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan 2012 - 2017 ... Our People Our Prosperity is built on priorities, and presents an action plan that is endorsed by the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Steering Committee (NSEPSC) and poised for implementation. The release of the plan will be immediately followed by action including monitoring and regular progress updates, as a plan is only as good as its implementation.

The Sustainable Employment Plan is presented in three sections. Section 1: Introduction and Overview, provides background information and an overview





of the plan's strategies. Section 2: Research and Analysis, documents, highlights and explains the evidence and research that formed strategies and action plans. Section 3: Strategy and Action Plan, captures the key priorities, strategies and actions articulated in this five-year plan for Nisga'a labour market development.

### **1.7 Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Planning Steering Committee**

The NSEPSC reflects broad-based community leadership that commits itself to, and advocates for, a cohesive and vibrant Nisga'a. Multiple influential community members were invited to sit as members of the steering committee, including Nisga'a Lisims Government, four village and two urban local governments, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a, SD# 92, Nisga'a Commercial Group, Nisga'a Valley Health Authority.

Each Steering Committee member was selected based on his or her long-term commitment to the planning process, and respect by the rest of the community members. Consequently, their leadership has brought credibility and structure to the integrated labour market planning process, resulting in a plan that addresses and supports Nisga'a labour market needs, challenges and opportunities. These leaders have been instrumental in encouraging community engagement and representation. They will continue to inform, engage, guide and lead Nisga'a forward while monitoring implementation, evaluation and realignment of priorities as necessary.



## 1.8 Background and Purpose

### Employment Issues

Overall, the unemployment rate among the Nisga'a people is 38.8%<sup>1</sup>, as compared with a BC Aboriginal on-reserve rate of 28.1%, an Aboriginal off-reserve rate of 21.3%, and an unemployment rate of 10.2% for the North Coast/Nechako region as a whole. This indicates the average rate of unemployment in the Valley is almost four times the rate in the surrounding territory.

Reasons for employment issues largely stem from the resource-based economy of the Nass Valley being hit hard a decade ago with a decline in the fishing and forestry sectors, which continue to decline, and produce a ripple effect felt today. For example, fisheries and forestry, the two main drivers of the regional economy only a decade ago, are now together employing only approximately 15% of the Nisga'a labour force. When surveyed (subjective responses<sup>2</sup>) as to why high levels of unemployment exist at the community level, the issues of labour demand and supply prevailed, mainly:

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<sup>1</sup> This number includes both (1) *structural unemployment* defined as structural problems in the economy and inefficiencies inherent in labour markets including a mismatch between the supply and demand of laborers with necessary skill sets, and (2) *frictional unemployment* defined as voluntary decisions to work based on each individuals' valuation of their own work and how that compares to current wage rates plus the time and effort required to find a job.

<sup>2</sup> *Skeena Native Development 2006 Labour Market Census*



- On the demand side: no job opportunities; weak economic base; limited seasonal opportunities
- On the supply side: lack of education, relevant training and skills

## Purpose and Goals

The overall purpose of this project is the identification of practical priorities that will form a baseline for assisting in policy development, and position training and education to prepare Nisga'a citizens to participate in meaningful employment and economic activity in order to be self-sufficient. More specifically, the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan will enable more effective human resource development spending to better match anticipated labour market trends and needs.

All four communities in the Nass Valley and the two Nisga'a urban locals have, to some extent, undertaken ad-hoc labour market analysis in developing business plans and annual work plans. However, the four villages and two urban locals recognize that their practices could be significantly improved if they had ready access to data and information, both archival and current, to enable them to produce cogent and accurate analyses in the most timely fashion possible.

As a result, the scope required for the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan entailed a comprehensive focus on four major labour market areas in the Nass Valley:

(1) Recognize Needs: What are the current and future human resource needs in the Nass Valley and two Nisga'a urban locals? (2) Inventory Current Capacity:



What are the current employable skills in the Nass Valley? How do these compare in each of the four Nisga'a Villages and two urban locals? (3) Identify Existing Gaps: What gaps exist between the current and future employment needs of the Nass Valley and the existing and projected capacity? (4) Map a plan of action: What programs and services should NLG, Village, and two urban local governments be creating and supporting to ensure all projected employment-skill gaps are eliminated over the next ten years?

## 1.9 Research and Consultation Overview

This plan is grounded in community input and knowledge, as well as intelligence and statistical evidence that validates strategic priorities and supports documented actions. Over 750 Nisga'a citizens were surveyed, at random, throughout all four Nisga'a Villages and two urban locals to assess the current and projected employment, health and wellness, housing, cultural and educational condition of the Nisga'a Valley. Multiple complementary research methods were used for data collection, including primary and secondary data and content analysis, gathered through questionnaires, key informant interviews, community organizations and programs, open town hall meetings, and focus groups held at each Nisga'a Village and two urban locals.

### Consultation Process Overview

During a planning meeting of the Nisga'a Lisims Government Programs & Services Directorate on September 25, 2008, the following questions were addressed: Why are we considering to study and plan for our future? What are the key priority areas and desired future outcomes? How will we study, plan and measure? Who will conduct the study, create the plan and measure the results? And when will the study and plan be created? From this discussion, a proposal



was drafted and the process began for the implementation of the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan.

In the next two years the applications for funding were completed, and finally in June 2010 the project took off. A Labour Market Research Coordinator (LMRC) was hired, followed by a videographer. The team began to make contact with the respective organizations in all communities in order to begin gathering information. This information was needed to address two issues that are central to the sustained labour market. First issue was to examine the current and future demand for labour and the second was to assess the skills that are currently available and necessary to maintain labour force participation in the medium to long term. The following will describe the methodology that was used for this project.

## Methodology

A Steering committee was developed with the membership of the four village governments, the two urban locals, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a, SD# 92, Nisga'a Valley Health Authority, and Nisga'a Lisims Government. This steering committee met and developed their terms of reference along with meeting dates to oversee the project development. The Steering committee was given a draft Individual Survey to review and make changes to. This was extremely important to make sure that the Nisga'a was given the opportunity to produce a culturally sensitive and respectful document that people would be comfortable responding to. A call for proposals for six "Survey Interviewers" was put forth and after the required allotment of time, they were offered contracts. These six individuals were brought together to spend one day undergoing training specific to the survey. Once this was completed, the Survey Interviewers went out into the 2010 Special Assembly to begin random surveying of Nisga'a citizens. The surveying continued for



several months until approximately 800 completed surveys were achieved. Surveys were entered into a database as they were completed. This was then compiled and forwarded to the Consultant to analyze. The surveys were completed by the end of December 2010.

Another important part of the proposal was the Town Hall meetings that were held in each of the four Villages and the two Urban Locals (Terrace and Prince Rupert/Port Edward). These meetings were open to the public and a S.W.O.T. analysis was done. This type of analysis is where each group is asked to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to employment, training, and the future for their community and the Nation as a whole.

Throughout the whole process the Videographer attended all meetings and recorded all of the sessions, including going out and seeing the employment that was happening in the communities. He interviewed about twenty individuals and asked key questions:

(1) What are the positive aspects of the current economic and employment situation in the Valley? What seems to be working? (2) How do you feel about the future economic situation of the Nass Valley, particularly jobs and employment? (3) What types of employment ought to be created in the Valley for Nisga'a? (4) What barriers do you see in creating the employment opportunities you suggest?

The videographer compiled all of his recordings into a historical process of the project, and also created a video to be released with the final report called the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan. This will be distributed to all of the representative organizations of the Nisga'a nation.





## Primary Data

Our information gathering began in the fall of 2010 with each of the Village Government officials and staff, and urban local officials and staff. Each office was asked to share documentation of their particular data that had been done for the areas. The information was collected to ask each department in the NLG sector to produce a list of all jobs currently staffed (existing workforce). This allowed the planning team to ask each department to add a list of proposed/potential jobs required in one, five, and ten years (supply and demand). Information was also requested from WWNI, SD#92 and NVHA. It was asked that all reports be shared with this project.

## Secondary Data

Statistics Canada database sources (e.g. Census, Aboriginal People Survey), Labour Market Survey, CANSIM Policies, Programs and Agreements (e.g. Federal Equity Program, LMDA and LMPA Agreements, AHRDS, ASEP, Provincial Labour Market Initiatives) Reports/Periodicals, and Analysis of Labour Market Conditions and Trends (e.g. by major banks, Conference Board of Canada, federal and provincial departmental research studies, etc.), Academic Theory and Projection Models (e.g. programs that make projections of labour market demand), and any other relevant published literature.

### 1.10 Guiding Principles for Process, Planning and Action

These principles guided the identification of priorities, and the resulting strategies and actions that form the Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan... Our People



Our Prosperity, an integrative approach to developing a skilled, supported and rewarded workforce that upholds a thriving Nisga'a Nation.

### **1. Inclusive**

The labour market planning process will exemplify a model of inclusiveness across all target groups in the Nass Valley, regardless of educational attainment, economic or employment status, sex, age, and/or ability. All members of the community were encouraged to participate - elders, youth, family heads, village and urban local administration, chiefs, councilors, general community members - so that each member group can bring their unique point of view and involvement to the planning process, ensuring that the diverse needs of the community are considered.

### **2. Accessible**

The local labour market planning process will support ease of access for labour market participants who are actively seeking information and supports related to business, employment, training and education, and the labour market.

### **3. Regional**

The labour market planning process will incorporate a welcoming and collaborative approach alongside community stakeholders, supporting a model of cooperation and integrated planning. To ensure communities and their leaders remained well-informed, active participants in the labour market plan, town hall meetings, focus groups and surveys were conducted in all four Nisga'a villages and two urban centres.



#### **4. Responsive**

The local labour market planning process will guarantee the active engagement of the community in dialogue to inform a plan that is effective, efficient, timely, and responsive to priorities. Participation encourages people to take responsibility for initiating and implementing projects, and also creates momentum and sustains support. Engagement expands the leadership base of the community, and presents opportunities to transfer planning and responsibility to other community members over time.

#### **5. Transparent and Accountable**

The local labour market planning process will provide and communicate a clear, transparent, easy-to-understand decision-making and reporting structure. Implementation plans will adhere to timelines and deliverables, where possible, or report alternative approaches to ensure success measures are achieved.

#### **6. Utilize Existing Assets**

The local labour market planning process will identify current research, best practices, initiatives, as well as incorporate appropriate strategies. This integrated approach will endeavor to avoid duplication, explore improvements to existing efforts and ensure a focused use of resources.



## ===== SECTION 2: Research Results and Analysis =====

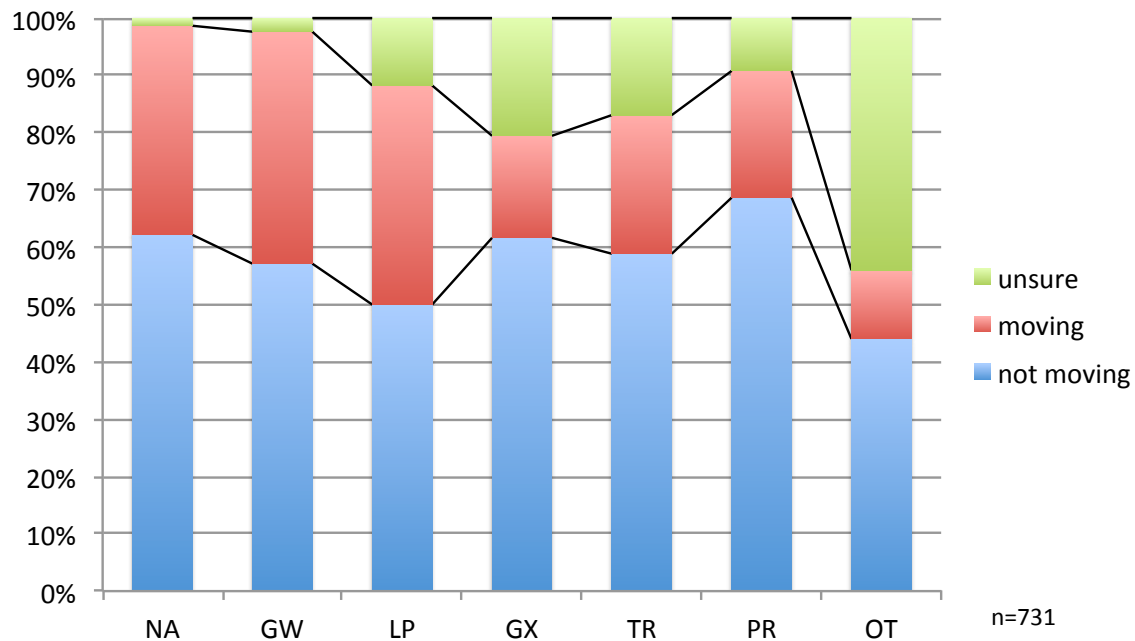
### 1.0 Demographics and Income

#### 1.1 Propensity for Moving Outside the Nass Valley

We asked respondents if they are thinking about moving within the next five years. The first thing that popped out is that, except for the “other” grouping (living in the Lower Mainland, other parts of BC, Alberta), there is a relatively low level of “unsure” responses. What uncertainty there is parallels the challenges to the local economy (more later): lowest in New Aiyansh, highest in Gingolx. Despite that, Gingolx has the lowest proportion of people that have made the decision to leave (except for “other”) and a proportion of people that are “not moving” that is as high as that in New Aiyansh and almost as high as Prince Rupert. However, on the Nass between 37% (New Aiyansh) and 49% (Laxgalts’ap) of the population is either planning to move or unsure about their plans. This uncertainty and indecision represents a challenge to both planners and those for whom plans are being made. This may in part be due to economic conditions in the Villages, but that is likely only part of the story, as the picture in Terrace is pretty much the same as on the Nass and only slightly more stable in Prince Rupert. Those in the broader Nisga’a Diaspora (“other”) have the lowest report of not moving and the highest report of being unsure (about 56% are either moving or unsure).



## % considering moving in 5 years by Current Address



The results for the question asking where those who plan to move (or are unsure of moving) would go are interesting and puzzling at once. The big message in this chart is that if someone is going to move, there is an overwhelming tendency to move out of the Northwest entirely (lowest in Terrace at 50%). As you go down the Valley there is an increasing likelihood of moving to either Terrace or Prince Rupert, and a decreasing likelihood of moving within the Valley (Gingolx hits “0”). Going against the current, almost 40% of those who may move from Terrace will move back into the Valley. People in Prince Rupert would move back at less than one third that rate (about the same level as people in New Aiyansh) and “other” would not move back at all. This raises the possibility



that migrants to Terrace, which is really “on the road to New Aiyansh”, maintain a special relationship to the Valley. This might focus initiatives to encourage Nisga’a people to move back to animate the Valley economy and culture (emphasize Terrace, do not expend too much energy on those who have migrated to the South Coast or Alberta.)

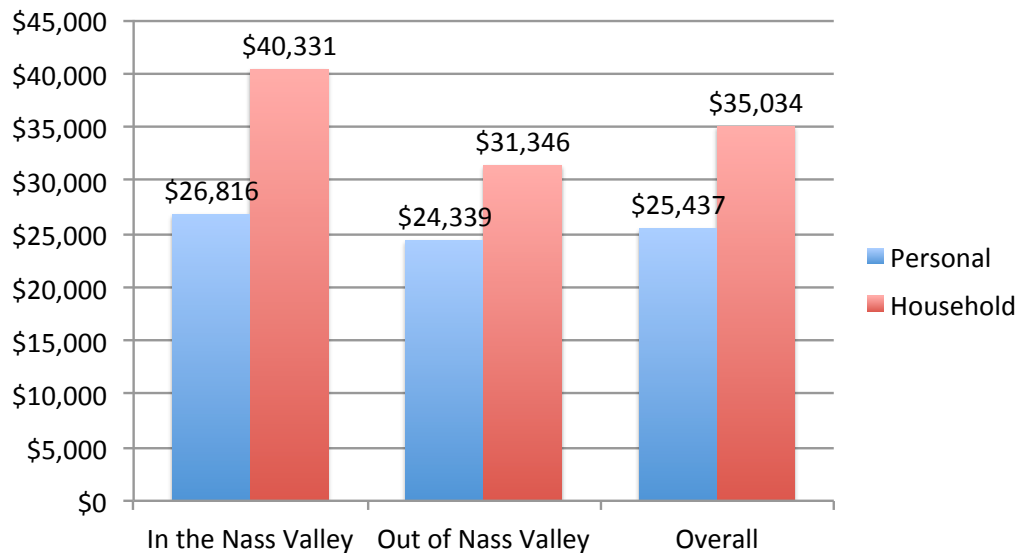
## 1.2 Personal and Household Income

In the face of the relatively hard times that will be reported in the following employment section, the income situation on the Nass appears to be fairly robust, at least if compared to the Aboriginal on reserve mean income. The average individual in the Nass Valley reported a personal income of almost \$27,000, which is about \$6,600 more than the 2006 Aboriginal on reserve income. This situation reverses when we move off Nisga’a land. Out of the Nass Valley the average personal income reported (\$24,339) is about \$2,000 less than that for BC Aboriginal living off reserve. These figures are both substantially lower than the income for BC non-Aboriginal’s (\$35,383). To put this into perspective, these figures are comparable to the average personal income for someone living on the Gulf Islands of BC. However, averages are only that. We get a more accurate perception of income on the Nass when we look at the charts that follow.





## Average Income by Current Address



### Personal

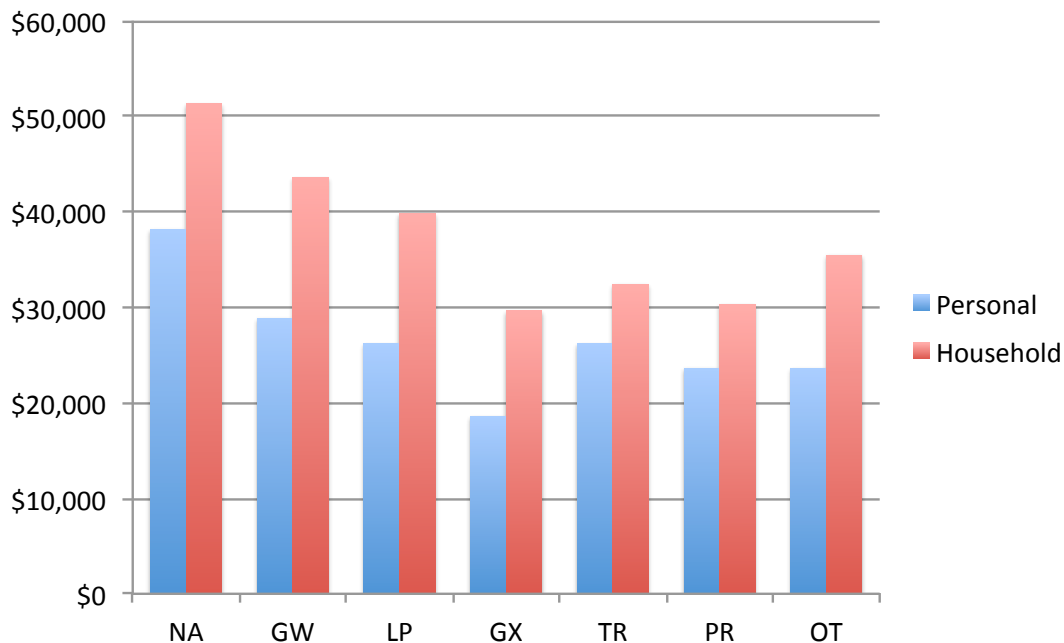
Aboriginal on reserve = \$19,154 (BC in 2006), Aboriginal off reserve = \$26,465 (BC in 2006)  
 Non Aboriginal = \$35,383 (BC in 2006)

The first presents average income by location. Here we see that an individual in New Aiyansh makes about \$37,500, which is almost \$11,000 more than the mean personal Nass Valley income generated by our survey. (A note of caution needs to be introduced here: we have been reporting income from two different sources, Statistics Canada and our survey. Statistics Canada reports income that is reported on income tax forms. Our data are self reported and a large portion of our sample was “unsure” of income levels. This uncertainty might arise from genuine confusion, or from a discomfort reporting income that might raise questions if it were reported, or from a reticence to discuss money at all. Our figures *may* be more accurate and inclusive than tax forms, and they might also be inflated by the reporting of gross income as opposed to income after tax.



Whatever problems there might be with the data in theory, it provides a sound basis for comparing income across the various pools of respondents.) In this vein, the mean personal income in New Aiyansh is \$19,000 more than the mean personal income reported in the poorest village, Gingolx. So the difference between personal income in the Valley and that in Terrace and Prince Rupert (which are comparable) is largely due to higher income levels in New Aiyansh. The picture for household incomes is more complex with incomes in New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, and Laxglats'ap substantially higher than Gingolx, Terrace, and Prince Rupert. Household income further abroad ("other") gets a modest, unexplained bump.

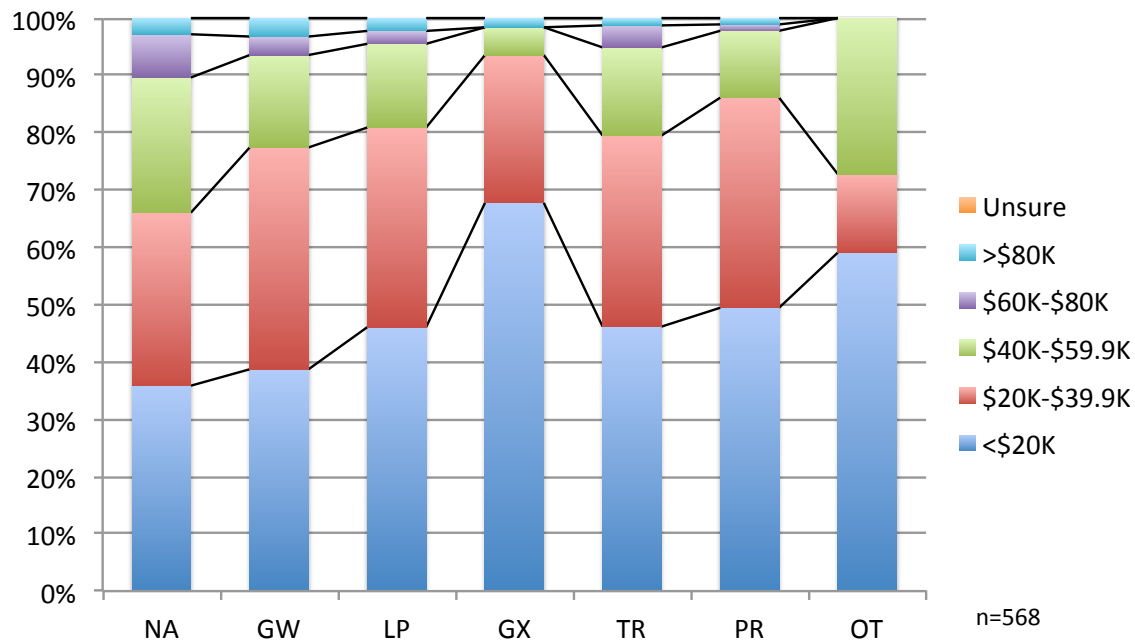
## Average Income by Current Address



These findings are put into even clearer relief when we look at income in our various sites broken down into categories. While just over 36% of people in New Aiyansh report personal incomes under \$20,000 this number climbs to 67% in Gingolx. At the top end (personal incomes over \$40,000) the portion drops from about 34% in New Aiyansh to just over 6% in Gingolx. Income in Gingolx is depressed by a combination of the high proportion reporting low income and the tiny proportion reporting higher incomes (\$40,000 to \$80,000 plus). The average personal income in Terrace is a saw off between modest numbers with income below \$20,000 and about the same portion of those making \$40,000 plus, as is found in Laxglats'ap. A substantial boost is added to the mean personal income in New Aiyansh by the relatively large portion of people earning \$60,000 - \$80,000. Those reporting from "other" locales have the highest portion of income below \$20,000 next to Gingolx and very modest higher incomes. The picture one gets of income generation outside the Nass is that Terrace has an established population that is, as we noted in the data on intentions to move, anchored in meaningful ways to the Nass.



## Personal Income by Current Address (excluding those reporting “unsure”)



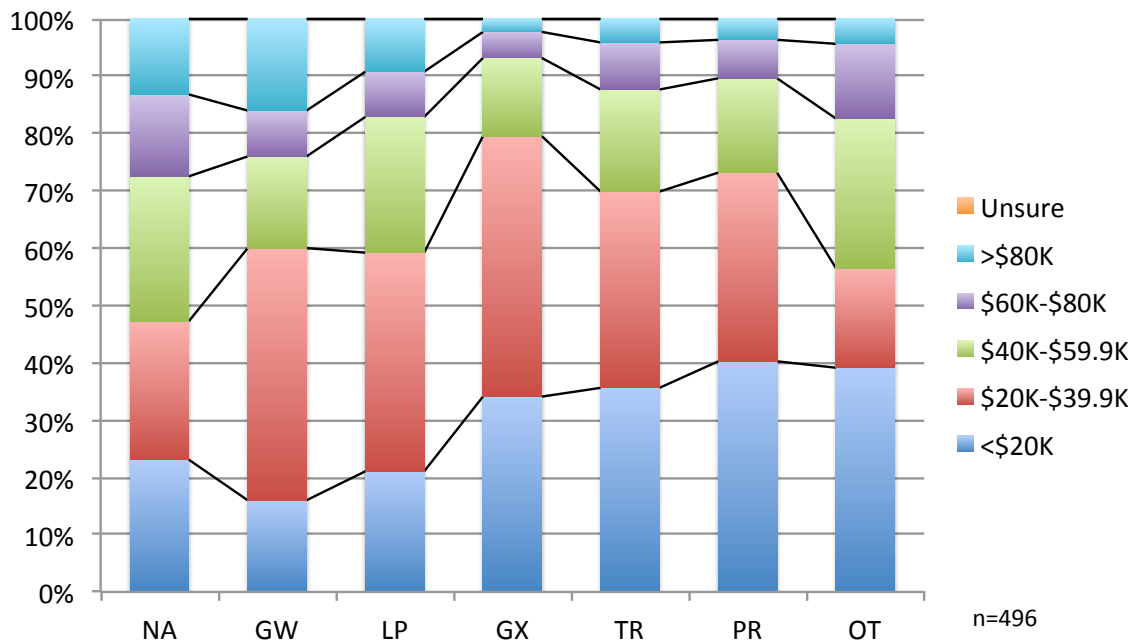
Data on household income adds some depth to our understanding. Beginning with New Aiyansh, we see a drop to about 23% (from 36% for personal income) in those families living with less than \$20,000 per year. There is likely a high portion of single parent families amongst this group. At the high end we see about 11% of the sample reporting \$60,000 or more. For comparison, the 2006 census reports that 21% of BC households reported incomes over \$60,000 and the City of West Vancouver has 50% of its earners reporting household incomes over \$90,000

([http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/ch\\_prov.asp](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/ch_prov.asp)). The trend down the Nass that was displayed by personal incomes is still



noticeable. Of deep concern is the high portion of households living on less than \$20,000 outside the Nass. There are obvious opportunities beyond the Nass that draw Nisga'a out, but there are also substantial risks, one being the challenges of supporting extended family. But the profile for "other" is much better for households than it is for personal incomes, so people do what they need to do.

## Household Income by Current Address (excluding those reporting "unsure")



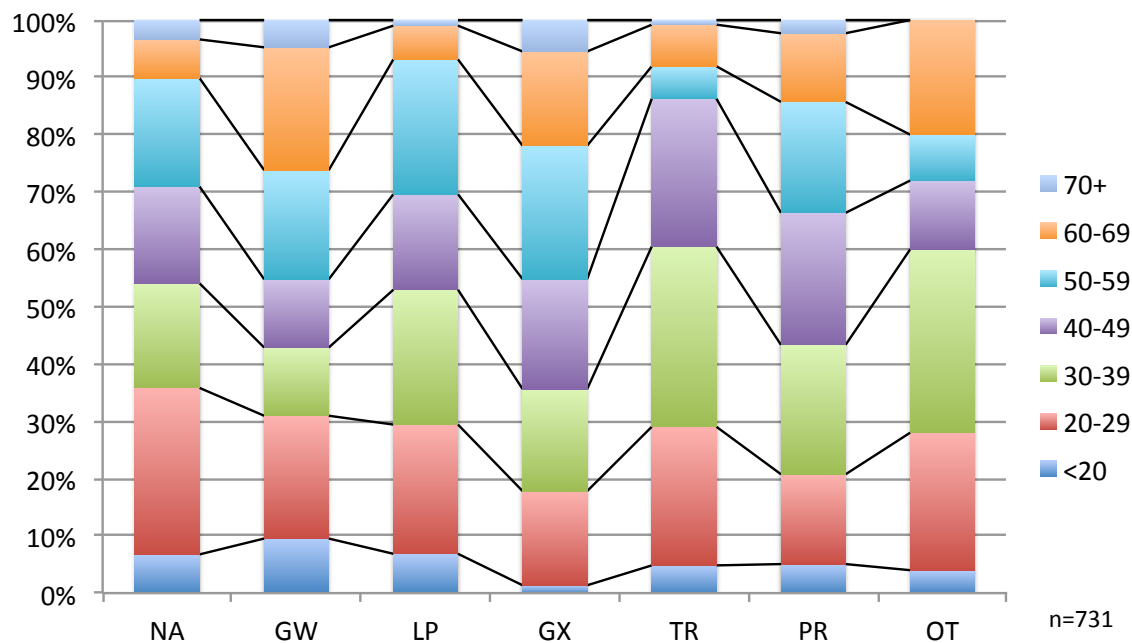
## 2.0 Employment

### 2.1 Interpreting the Survey Results

Those conducting the survey administration in each village or city were very successful in getting cooperative buy-in by large numbers of people. The impressive number of thoroughly completed surveys presents a meaningful cross-section of the employable population. However, the age representation varies from village to village and does not track the population pyramid. For example, the Gingolx sample has very low representation of the under-20 group and a representation that is proportionally much larger of those 60-69. Those administering surveys approached people they knew or people who were working together. This introduces a non-random element to subject selection. Because of this we should not make too much of gaps in survey categories: an example would be the “0’s” reported in Gitwinksihlkw for jobs in education, law, health, and art, clearly not an accurate reflection of the workforce here. This is not seen as a serious criticism of the findings but an expected result of the method of administration, which will inevitably reflect the circle of contacts of the person doing the survey administration and accidents of where they run into a cooperative group. It is the consultant’s opinion that comparisons by village or city or against regional or Provincial statistics are quite valid given the relatively high proportion of the adult population surveyed in each site.



## % of Age group by Current Address

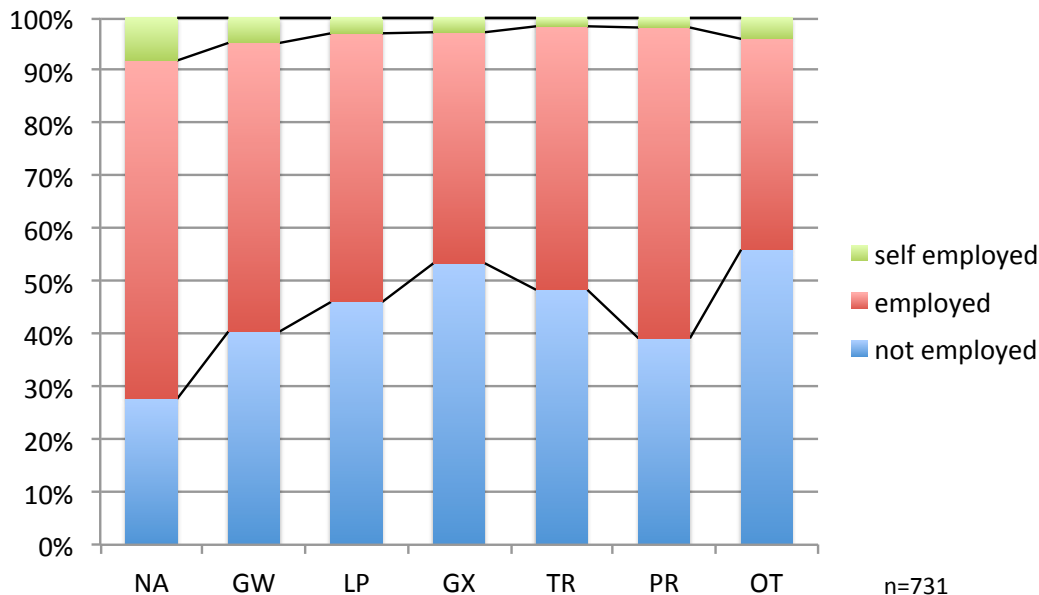


### 2.2 Employment Along the Nass and Beyond

This snapshot of employment among the Nisga'a peoples lays out two realities of work on the Nass. The first is the alarmingly high rate of overall unemployment (38.8% as compared with a BC Aboriginal on-reserve rate of 28.1%, an Aboriginal off-reserve rate of 21.3%, and an unemployment rate of 10.2% for the North Coast/Nechako region as a whole). So the average rate of unemployment in the Valley is almost four times the rate in the surrounding territory.



## % Employment Status by Current Address



The second reality is that current unemployment increases as we move down the Nass: from New-Aiyansh (27.7% unemployed) progressively down the valley to Gingolx (with a high of 53.4% unemployment). This is paralleled in reverse by the rates of self-employment: highest in New Aiyansh at a modest 8.1% when compared with the average for BC as a whole (about 19%), but progressively lower, bottoming out at 2.7% in Gingolx. What is not tracked in this survey is unpaid or barter activity, exchanges in the “underground economy” where money changes hands without formal tracking, and any money earned through illicit activities like growing or marketing dope or bootlegging. It is possible that Gingolx has unpaid work that contributes to the general economy, for example





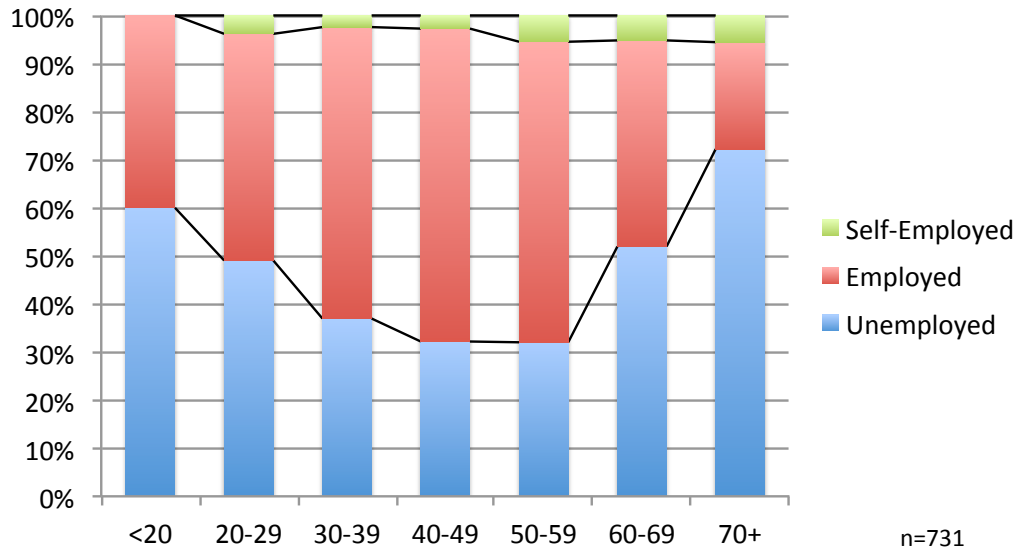
food fishing or hunting, that somehow softens the lack of paid income but that is not tracked in this survey.

### 2.3 How Age Affects Employment Status

Employment often plays important roles in socialization and personal development, perhaps especially within the dominant culture where until recently choice in employment and employment itself were just assumed. How does employment intersect with age amongst Nisga'a peoples? Current employment never approaches levels expected in a healthy economy (including both employed and self-employed at 67.8% for those 40-49 and 68% for those 50-59). It is still clearer that unemployment is at an unacceptable level for the young: 60% of those under 20 and 49.1% of those 20-29 are unemployed. This corresponds to an employment rate of 40% for those under 20 and 47.1% for those 20-29. Few societies are able to host a mass of young people who are not meaningfully engaged in sustaining their culture and people without disastrous consequences. This has to be an urgent general priority of community economic development.



## Employment Status by Age Group



Nisga'a Estimated Unemployment (working age) = 38.8%  
 BC On reserve Aboriginal Unemployment (2006) = 28.1%  
 BC Off reserve Aboriginal Unemployment (2006) = 21.3%  
 BC Non Aboriginal Unemployment (2006) = 15%

An encouraging statistic is the 3.8% rate for self-employment for the latter group. As noted earlier with the group employment data, the rate for self-employment in New Aiyansh across all age groups is 8.1%. While many forms of self-employment require a greater population base than exists in the villages in order to flourish, the disparity from New Aiyansh down the Valley argues for at least a quadrupling of self-employment in Gingolx. We need to actively explore forms of self-employment that are not population dependent (e.g. small scale resource extraction, arts and crafts for sale outside the Valley, internet marketing, etc.).

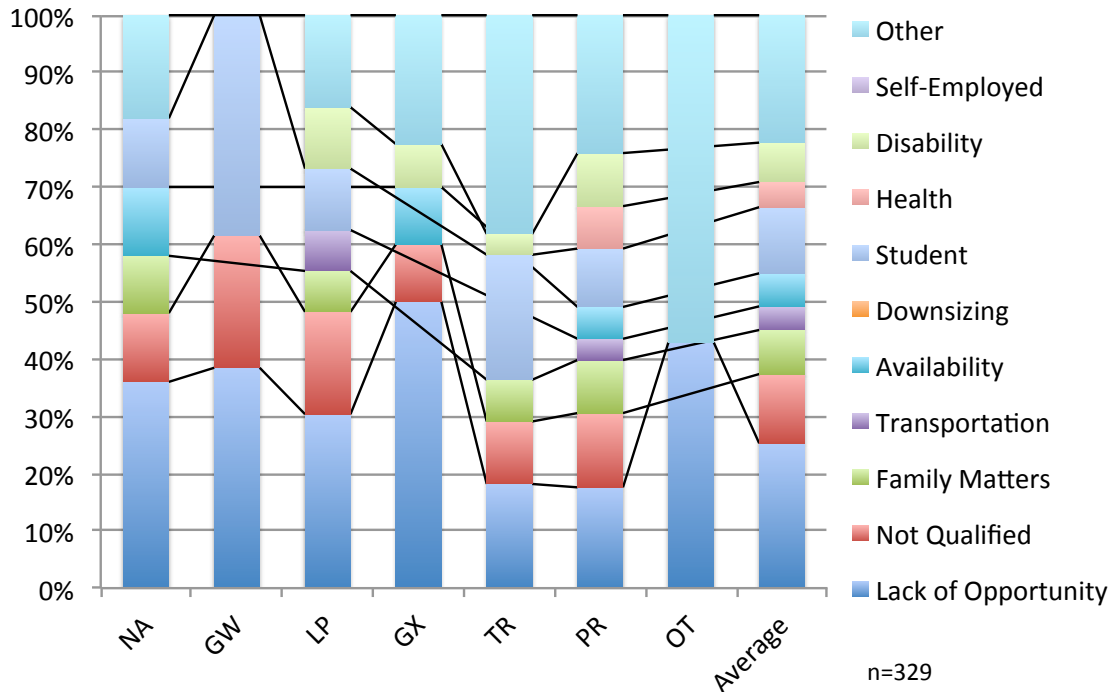


## 2.4 Reasons for Lack of Employment

And what reasons do people give when asked why they are unemployed? This chart emphasizes lack of opportunity as the leading reason people state, the implication being that, given the chance, people would choose gainful employment. This is a major reason everywhere, but greatest on the Nass, and at almost 50%, the worst in Gingolx. The second major reason is that “I don’t have the qualifications for most jobs.” The implications for education and training are obvious. “Family matters” play a role in New Aiyansh, Laxgalts’ap, Terrace, and Prince Rupert. An interesting observation is the relative importance of student status as a barrier to employment only in Terrace. Does this indicate that Terrace is a major centre for education and upgrading for the Nass Valley?



## Top reasons you are not currently employed



### 2.5 What Types of Jobs are People Working?

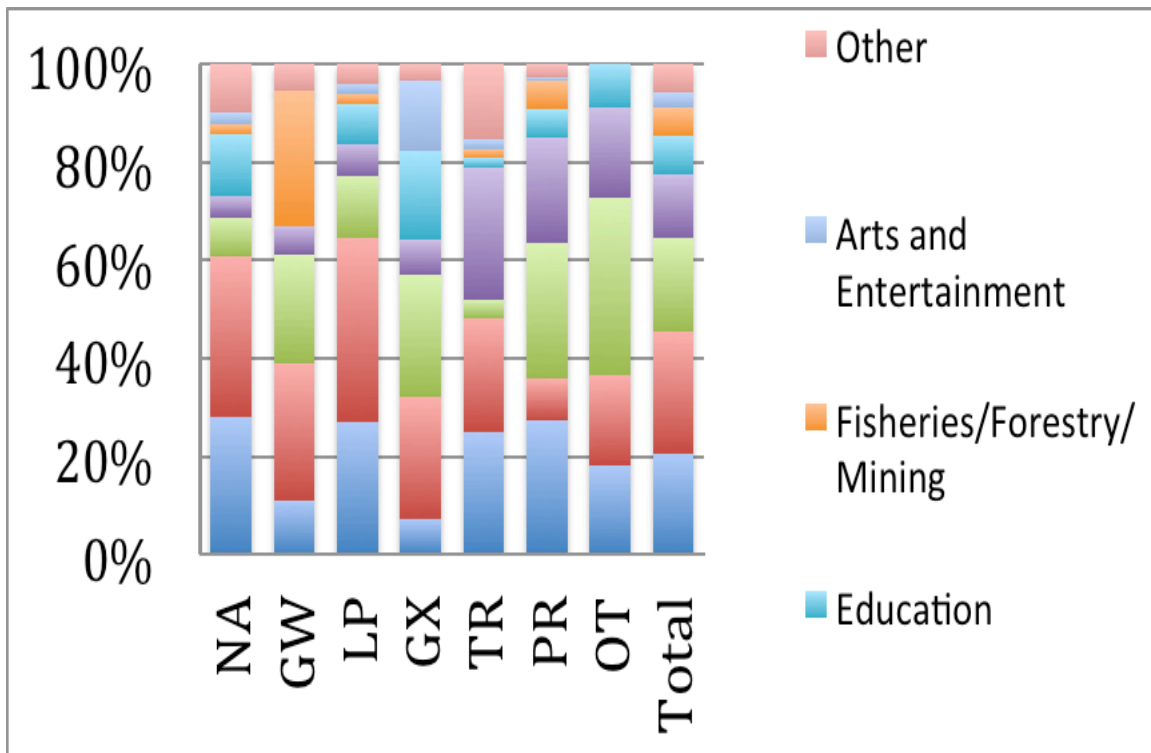
What sorts of jobs are people working? Before we describe this in detail we need to look at the chart as a whole. What is immediately apparent is that one size will not fit all on the Nass, either in describing employment or in devising effective interventions. The proportion of the local workforce engaged in any particular field is highly variable along the Nass. This means that efforts to improve workforce readiness will have to be tuned to each village according to the employment available. But this graph also begs the question “what sorts of businesses could be innovated along the valley to grow the pool of work



opportunities?” Like other areas of BC, little of the food consumed is locally grown. Historically the Nass villages were largely self-sufficient. Initiatives supporting local food production would connect with a strong current flowing in the rest of the province. Arts and entertainment are significant employers only in Gingolx (14.3%), forming only 2.6% of jobs overall. Resource extraction (fisheries, forestry, mining) occupies 27.8% of workers in the Gitwinksihlkw sample: over ten times the level in any location except Prince Rupert (5.7%) or the respondents in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere (“other”) (11%). There has to be an instructive story there. Tourism, hospitality, and retail numbers are low throughout the Valley and reach the number four employers because of the large numbers of people employed in these occupations in Terrace and Prince Rupert. Surely tourism is a natural area to look to for growth in the Valley. Promoting local village and valley economic development will require a combination of collaboration and innovation at the village level and the development of Valley-wide initiatives and supports.



## Top Seven Current Job Titles



Let us now turn to the details inherent in this chart. As might be expected, in New Aiyansh the top employer at 33% is the combination of social services, government, and recreation. This grouping is also a significant employer in the rest of the Nass and in Terrace as well. Business and Administration is a major employer in New Aiyansh, Laxgalts'ap, and both Terrace and Prince Rupert but much less prominent in Gingolx (7%) and Gitwinksihlkw (11%).

"Health" only adds 2.6% of jobs in total. In order to effectively discuss this issue we need to refer to data from other sections of this report. When this low percentage of employment in health is put together with the views of



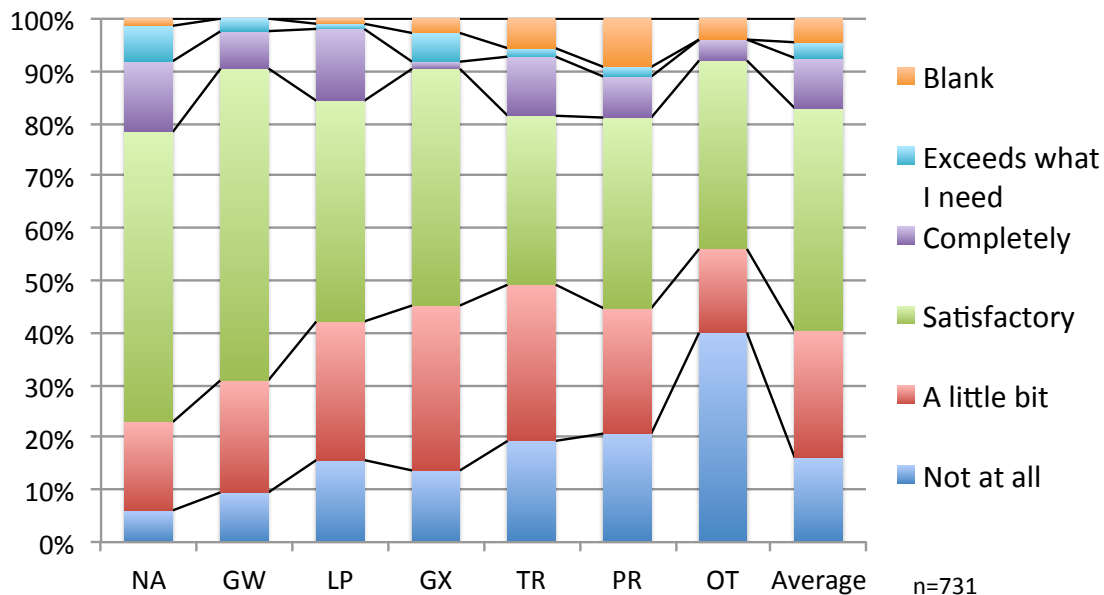
healthcare on the Nass expressed in other areas of this survey and the interest expressed in training for careers in health, surely this is an area that needs to be supported.

Population trends underway and widely discussed in the media are going to make this an increasingly important area. While there is going to be an increase in the numbers of older adults requiring specialized care and facilities and programs to age in place, the famous “grey wave”, the demographic drive in the Nass is more from the bottom-heavy population pyramid: children and youth. There is a Canada-wide concern over the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and the life-long increases to health risk that come with it (cardiovascular disease, diabetes and associated vision, kidney, and vascular problems, arthritic degeneration, already at elevated levels amongst First Nations peoples, etc.). First Nations peoples in general will be hit with a double whammy of increased risk and increased numbers of people at risk. Broad lifestyle, preventive, acute and chronic care needs beg to be integrated into economic development planning along the Nass. However, when we asked about the types of jobs participants would like to see on the Nass, health came in at a modest 8.1% average. Considering that almost 11% of the BC workforce was employed in healthcare in 2008 ([www.guidetobceconomy.org/major\\_industries/health\\_care.htm](http://www.guidetobceconomy.org/major_industries/health_care.htm)), clearly awareness has to be raised. But the context for attitudes towards and interest in healthcare as a profession is shaped by perceptions of how services are meeting needs now and, more importantly, the view looking forward. Again, we see a trend down the valley: those saying healthcare services meet present needs “not at all” or “a little bit” ranges from a low of 23% in New Aiyansh to a high of 44% in



Gingolx (higher still in Terrace at 48%).

## Do Nass Valley health care services meet your present needs?



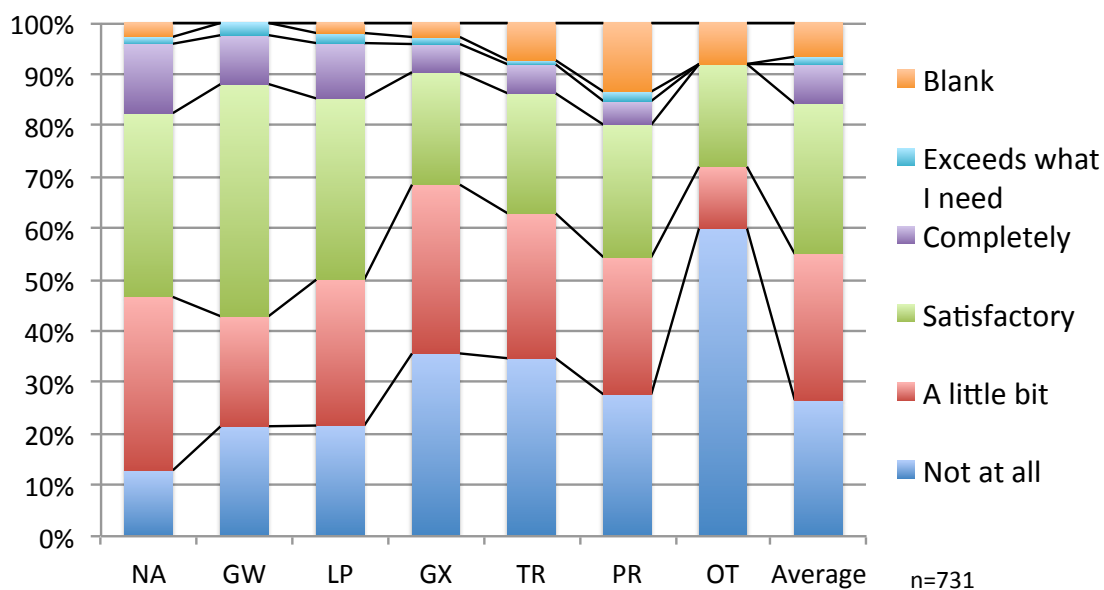
And looking forward, this failure of confidence in local healthcare is far more profound: Gitwinksihlkw reports the lowest total of “not at all” or “a little bit” at 43%, followed by New Aiyansh at 46%, and peaking in Gingolx (close to 68%!). These findings urge the evolution of a carefully articulated plan for moving forward that expresses itself at the village level by perceptible improvements. This is perhaps an example of the legacy of colonization, the Nursing Station replacing the “medicine box” of treaty language. It is thought that Nisga’a youth





will be more interested in participating in healthcare when they see it as an effective, respected and respectful support to a thriving Nass Valley.

## Will Nass Valley health care services as they exist today meet your needs in ten years?



Education employs no one in the sample in Gitwinksihlkw (we mentioned that this "0" is most likely an artifact of survey administration), 8.3% of the sample in Laxgalts'ap, 12.4% in New Aiyansh, and a substantially higher 17.9% in Gingolx. Only Gingolx, at 14.3%, employs significant numbers in arts and entertainment. Perhaps a closer look at involvement in both art and education in Gingolx will provide models for increasing work opportunities elsewhere in the Valley. As noted, the great variability in employment patterns and opportunities argue for



a series of opportunities for sharing perceived problems and local innovations and solutions. An example might be the highly successful Gingolx Crabfest, which blends tourism, arts, and entertainment supported by business/administration and social services, government, and recreation. However, a weekend event will not support the economy to any sustained degree. We have mentioned a second example of capitalizing on success in one region would be sharing information on resource extraction (fisheries, forestry, mining) from Gitwinksihlkw (at 27.8% apparently the only game on the Nass).

Trades are an occupation that has both substantial numbers (lowest in New Aiyansh at 7.9% and highest in Gingolx at 25%) and widespread appetite for apprenticeship training (to be reported in detail later). The dramatic difference in participation in Terrace (3.9%) as compared with Prince Rupert (27.4%) merits close examination. While it might be said trades training is in a shambles in BC, this is no reason for the Nass to not go ahead with innovating a made-on-the-Nass set of programs. This will require sustained collaboration with government agencies and institutions like BCIT to allow for the wide recognition valued by survey respondents. A tremendous opportunity to instigate and focus trades training emerges from the housing needs reported later. The prominent improvement desired was for renovation of the existing housing stock. This work would require trained workers in all the building trades and might be able to be funded from Federal grants for First Nations housing.

## 2.6 What Types of Jobs Would You Like to See?

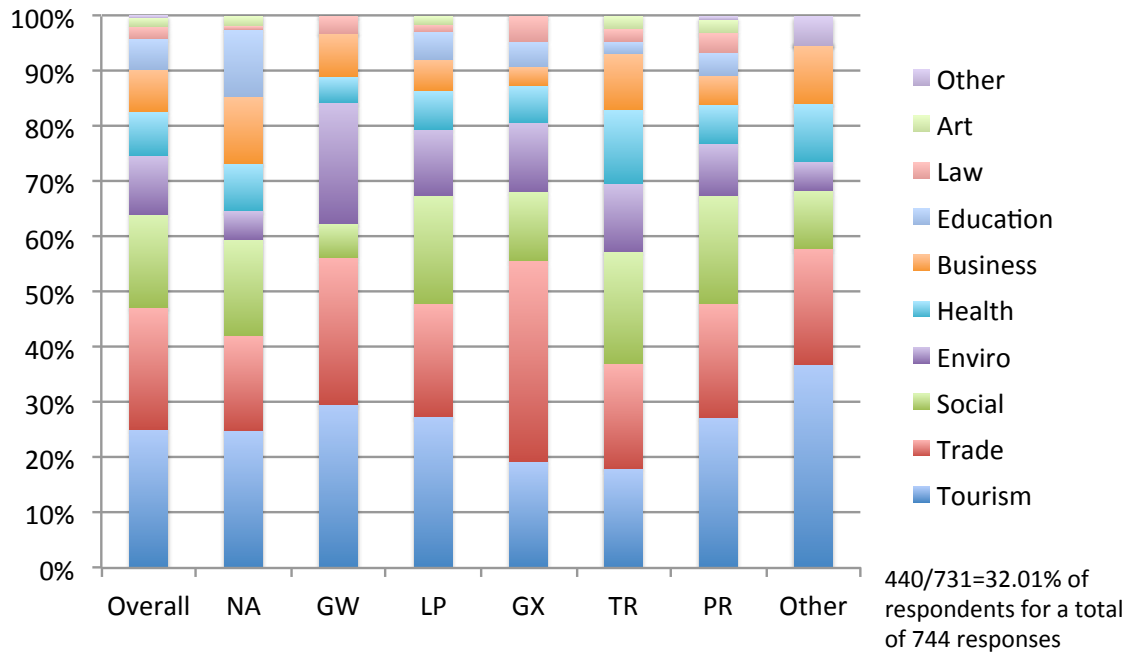
To gain a comprehensive answer to that question, we first asked participants to “blue sky” the types of jobs they would like to see in the Nass Valley. The top five responses were the ones you might expect from a community economic development consultant: tourism (25%), trades (22%), the infrastructure



grouping of social services, government, and recreation (17%), health services (8%), and business (8%). In this set of priorities, tourism development is stressed (it moves from 14% of current jobs to 25%) and the same is true for trades (17% to 22%). The infrastructure grouping is **de**-emphasized (23% to 17%) but because this finding is presented as a percentage increases in one or two components will subtract from others. Resource extraction is seen as something that should grow (moves from 4% of actual jobs to almost 11%) and it seems that business (24% of actual jobs) is doing OK as is (it is selected as a set of jobs that participants want to see more of in only 8% of cases). One very interesting finding is that arts and entertainment **drop** in emphasis from a very low base of 2.6% to only 1.5%. This reveals the need to begin the conversation that is effectively cultivated by arts groups all over the nation emphasizing that the arts and entertainment industry is one of the most efficient generators of local wealth. Although precision is difficult, ACTRA estimates that the arts and entertainment industry contributes \$85 billion (7.4%) to the economy of Canada. Increasing tourism without increasing the position of those who can best present the evolving face of Nisga'a culture does not make sense.

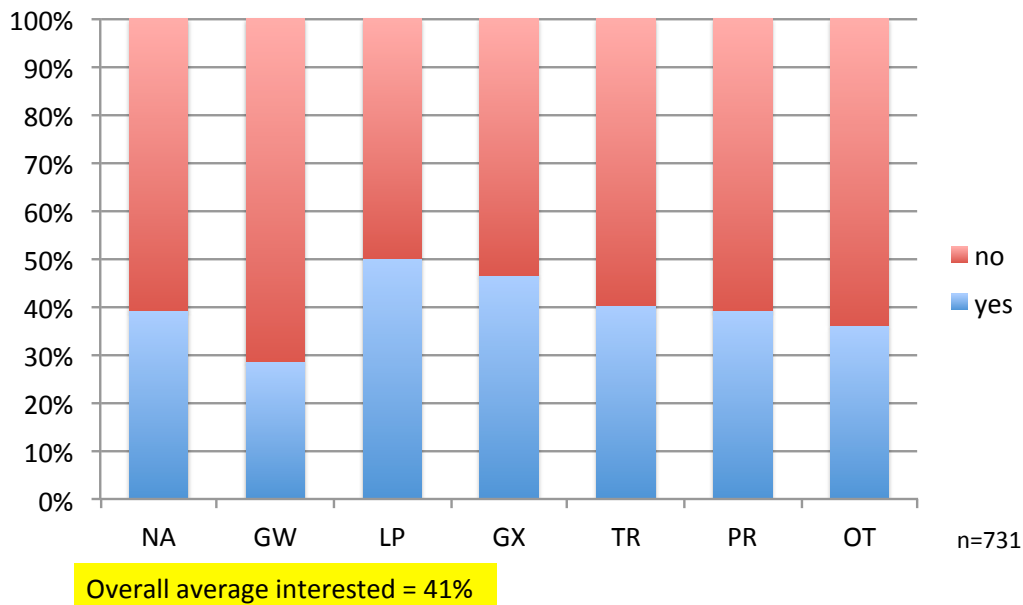


## Types of jobs participants would like to see in the Nass Valley



The second question we asked is expressed in the following graph:

## Are you interested in being employed in the Nass for a job that is not currently available (or exist)?



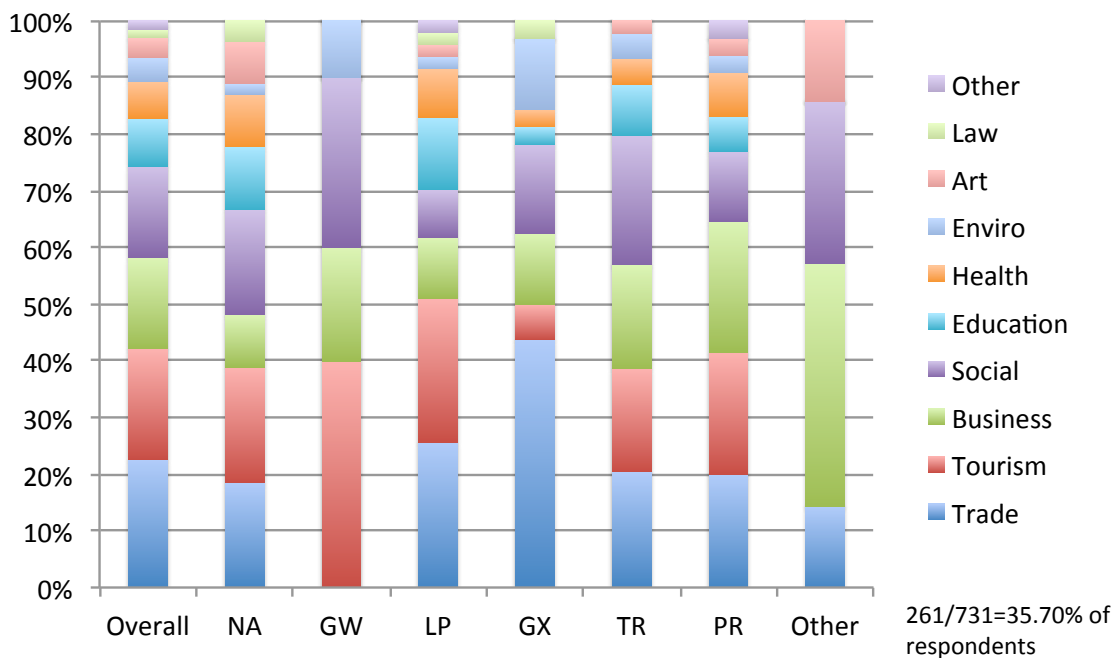
The answer is “yes” for from 28% to 50% of our respondents (average 41%). This is enthusiastic support for innovation of jobs on the Nass. The types of jobs participants would like to see in the Nass Valley, overall, include tourism (25%), trades (22%), social services/government/recreation (17%), resource extraction (10.6%), health (8%), and business (7.7%). Tourism, trade, social services/government/recreation, and resource extraction feature as top choice occupations in all the villages and Terrace and Prince Rupert as well. When asked a more personal question as to which job they would like to work in if it were available in their area the top choices overall are, in order of preference,



trades (22.6%), tourism (19.5%), business (16.1%), social services/government/recreation (16.1%), and education (8.4%).

The major difference evident is the drop in “health” and the rise in “education”, which may reflect a perception that working in healthcare professions is less appealing. The other finding that stands out is the change in evaluation of “trades” in Gitwinksihlkw. Almost 27% recognized trades as a type of job they perceived a need for in the Valley, but nobody who was already qualified indicated it as something they were personally interested in. This may be because people in trades are already working in Gitwinksihlkw.

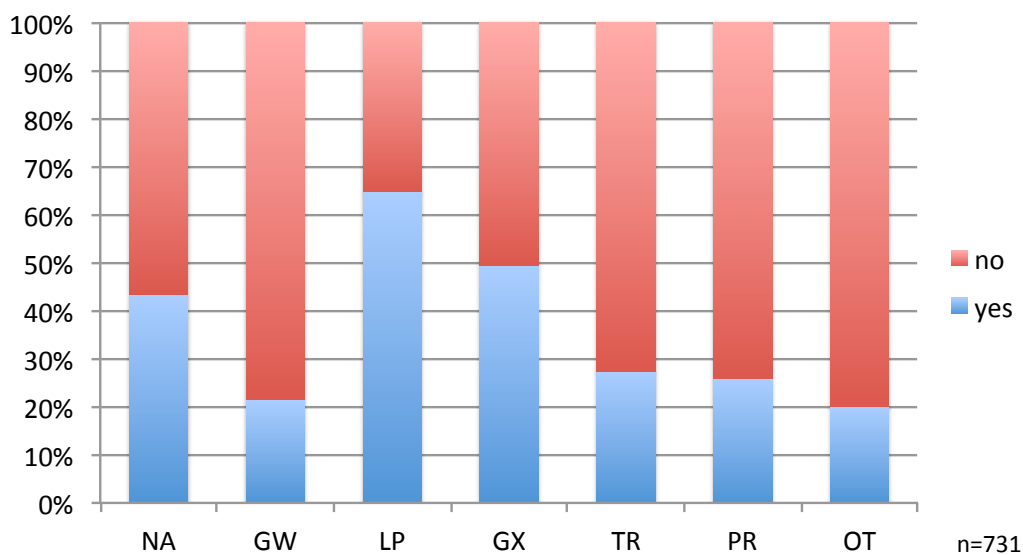
## Jobs participants would like to be employed in but cannot find in Nass Valley



And what about training for existing jobs? Again, the average (37%) indicates a workforce that is ready to adapt to employment opportunities, including retraining. This interest is strongest in Laxgalts'ap (an impressive 64%) and lowest in Gitwinksihlkw (at 22%). This is more evidence of a motivated workforce. The question for study stakeholders is how that retraining might best be delivered.

## 2.7 Qualifications and Training Required

Are you interested in a job that now exist in the Nass but you are not qualified for?



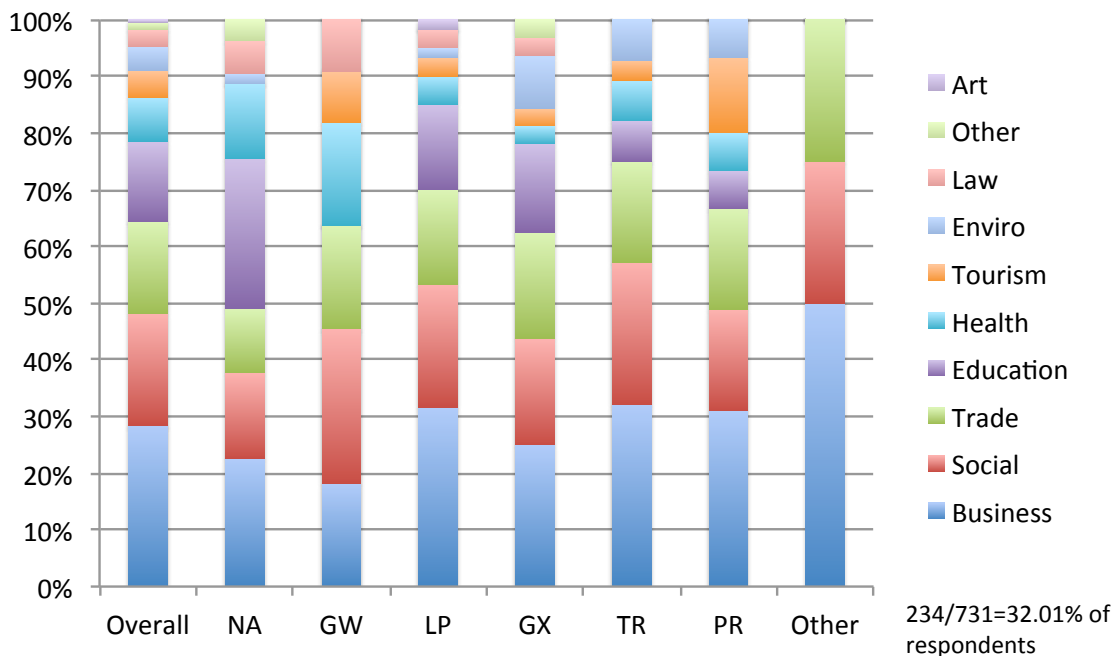
Overall average interested but not qualified = 37%

Let us get specific about the sorts of work that people would seek retraining to qualify for. In this context, business rises in appeal (16% of the whole group would like to work in business but can not find a job, whereas 28% would retrain in order work in business). "Trades" produce the reverse reaction: 22.6% of



people who are already trained would take work in trades if it existed while only 16% of our whole sample would retrain to enter trades. This may reflect the time investment required for apprenticeship and it may also be the case that trades apprenticeship is more easily available outside the Valley and would require moving at least temporarily. People who were interested in education/retraining were asked what occupations they wished to enter after they had retrained. This produced essentially the same priorities as the previous question: the overall top four jobs are business (26%), social services/government/recreation (16%), trades (16%), and education (15%). Tourism (8%) and health (7%) trail behind as choices.

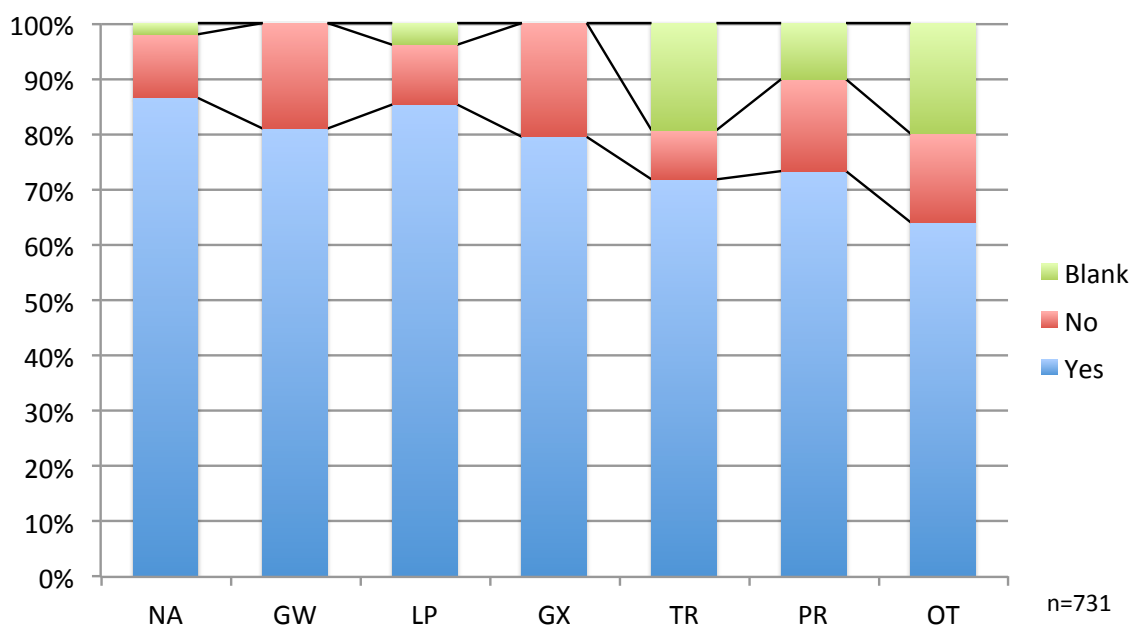
## Jobs in the Nass Valley participants would like to be employed in but are not qualified





The next chart attests to the eager willingness of survey participants to upgrade their skills. The vast majority of people expect that continued skill development is part of the job.

## Do you wish to upgrade your skills in the next 5 years?



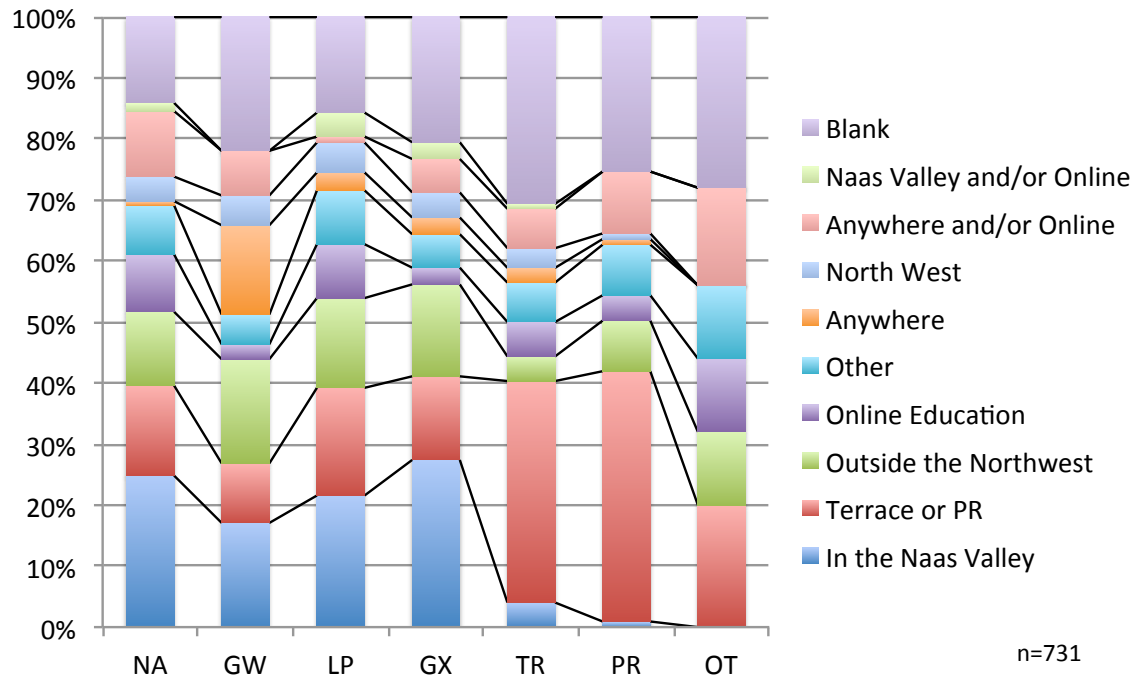
When asked where they would like to do their education/retraining only a minority of those living on the Nass would prefer training where they live (a high of 28% in Gingolx and a low of 17% in Gitwinksihlkw). However, the majority of those living in Terrace or Prince Rupert would choose to stay home for their retraining. It



seems that retraining is seen by many on the Nass as an opportunity to leave the Valley, almost equally to go to Terrace/Prince Rupert or to leave the Northwest. There appears to be a very modest interest in internet-based training whatever their home base. This flies in the face of the current movement towards distributive learning, whether through internet or paper-based courses. A substantial portion of the sample is open to training wherever and however it is offered. We will later report on the general dissatisfaction with educational options in the Valley. This has to affect interest in training where you live, whether in class, by paper-based courses, or via the internet. It must be presumed that improving the relevance and effectiveness of training and education on the Nass will dramatically increase interest in training where you live.



# Where would you like to train?



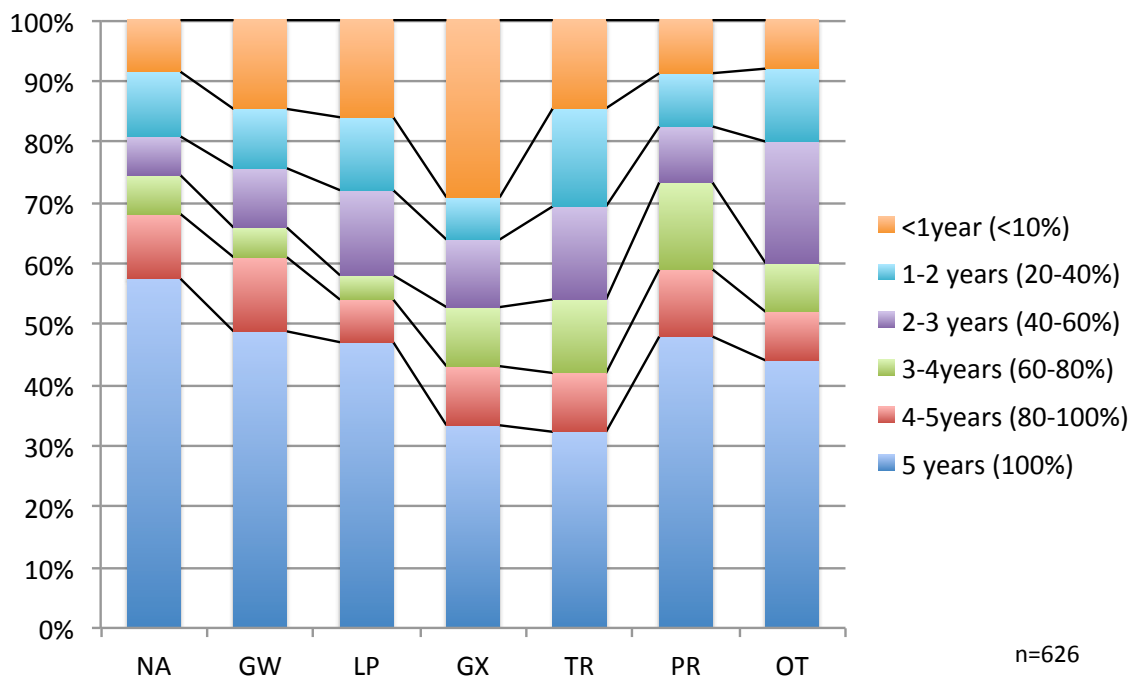
## 2.8 Employment over the Past Five Years

Another way of looking at employment is to ask what portion of the past five years individuals have been employed. This creates a more complex picture of employment on the Nass. From this perspective work experience in New Aiyansh is less solid than seems when simply looking at current employment, with 39% of the sample working for the whole five years and 16% being employed for less than one year. Gitwinksihlkw leads the survey sites with 50% of people holding employment for the full five years, with a profile similar to that in Prince Rupert. Gingolx is at the bottom of this curve with the lowest portion



(32%) employed for the full five years and a very concerning 29% working less than one year. The poor showing for Gingolx will be reinforced when we present findings on income. This deviation from the picture for current employment attests to a changeable labour market.

## Time employed in the last 5 years



### 2.9 Reasons for Leaving Work

In a situation of job scarcity, the reasons people give for leaving a job provide important clues to improving the employment experience and perhaps even the employment rate. When we look at specifics, the quality of management/supervision is an important reason everywhere except Gingolx and “Other” (this residence category produced very few responses and might be



ignored). Seasonal employment, which is clearer as a problem in the averaged data, is an important limiter of employment especially in Gingolx. Lack of advancement and career development opportunities appear to be alternative reasons everywhere except Terrace where both are stated. Problems in the work environment itself emerge only in New Aiyansh, Terrace, and Prince Rupert. These locations tend to have more jobs to choose from and this possibility may allow people to weigh the job environment more heavily.

## Top reasons for leaving job by a local employer



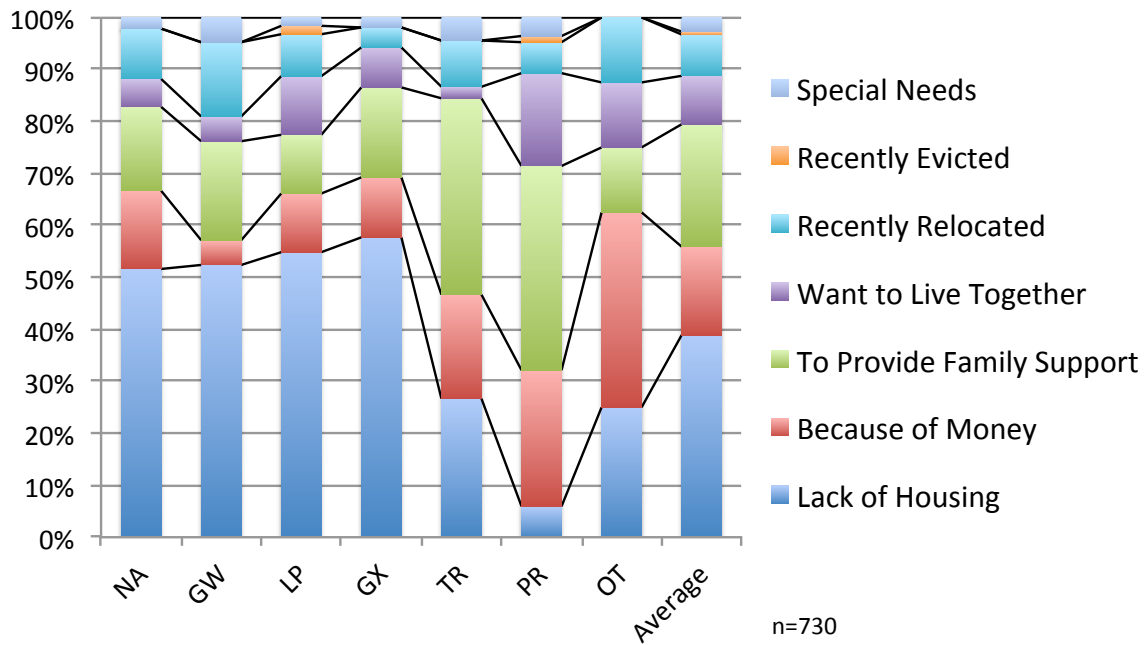
## 3.0 Housing

### 3.1 Families and Housing

Amid participants in the Nass Valley villages, “lack of housing” is the strongest determinant behind why more than one family unit is living in a household, and rises slightly moving down the valley to flux between 50 and 60%. “To provide family support” and “because of money” trail as second and third most dominant factors in the Nass Valley villages. Amongst Urban Local participants, a “lack of housing” is still a factor (especially in Terrace), but “money” issues and the need “to provide family support” become dominant factors. Also, specifically in Prince Rupert the desire to live together becomes more prevalent, rising to 17.9%. Additionally, a “lack of housing” registers at not even 10% in Prince Rupert, a stark contrast to results in other regions. This speaks to the differences in tangible and cultural needs for Nisga’a people living in Nass villages and Urban Local centers.



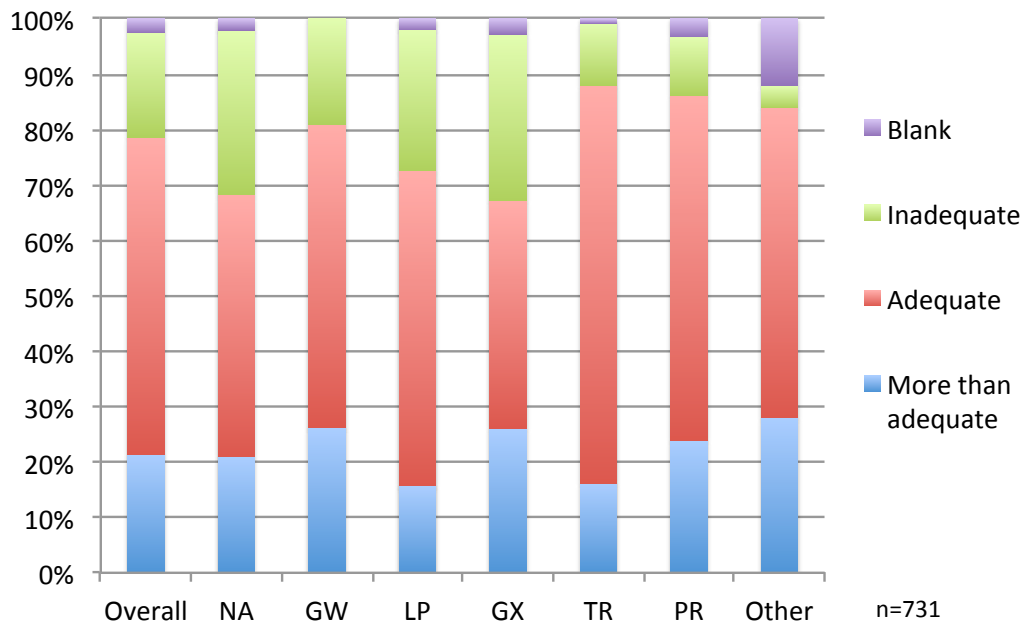
## Why more than one family unit living in your household?



### 3.2 Adequacy of Accommodation and Proposed Changes

Overall, 21.3% of participants rated their current accommodation as “more than adequate”, a strong 57.3% believe their accommodation is “adequate”, 18.9% “inadequate”. However, specifically within Nass villages, “inadequate” ratings are higher, indicating this is where the major needs for improvement lie - this is discussed in more detail below.

## How would you describe your current accommodation?

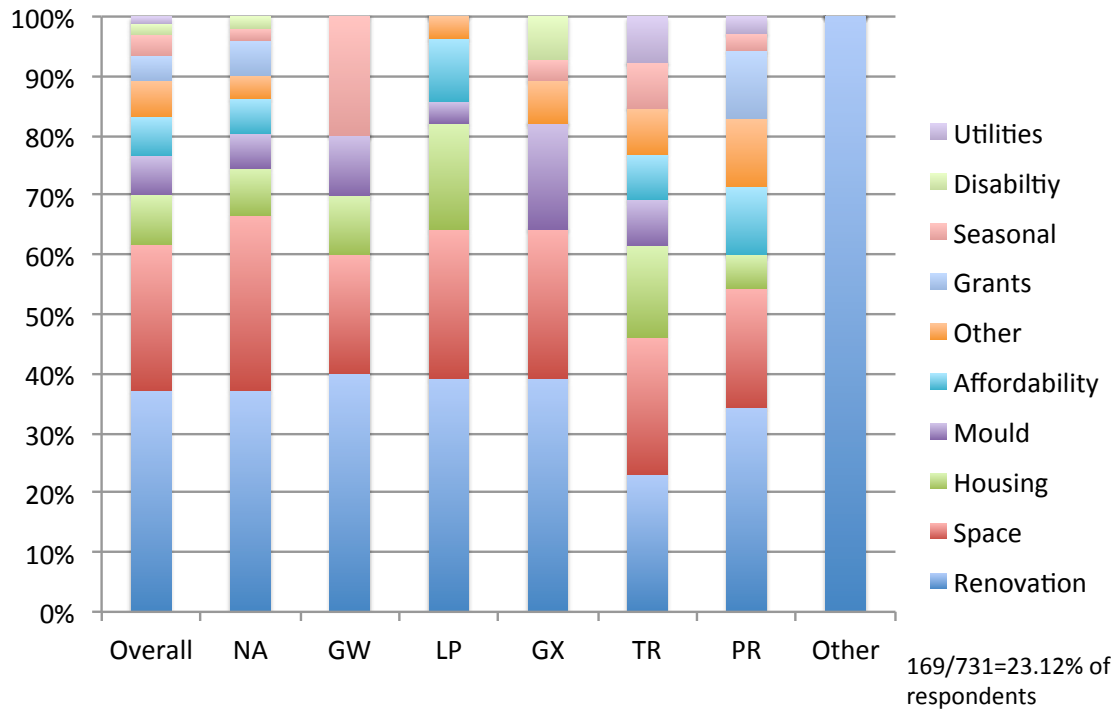


While “increased housing availability” was present at 8.3%, people generally indicated they would prefer improving their current residence, versus moving or building new homes. This is evident since a substantial 36.7% of all participants who reported their current housing, as inadequate specified renovations would improve the situation. Moreover, “increased space” was the second highest overall response at 24.3%; this need could also be met through renovations. Participants in “Other” regions only contained two respondents for this question, contributing to the lack of diversity in their responses and little impact on overall results. The percentage of people who consider their housing inadequate, combined with the top indicated improvement methods supports the potential behind an increased source of trade employment through renovation-orientated



housing improvement initiatives that would benefit individuals and the community as a whole.

## Ways to Improve Inadequate Housing



Conversely, findings for change desired by all surveyed participants, regardless of their current housing situation, were quite different and indicated a trend toward new housing. For example, participants' overall; top three change preferences included increased housing "availability" (21%), "type" (19.5%) and "affordability" (19.5%), and renovation "need" and "quality" only registered at a modest 5.9% and 4.18% respectively. These results may indicate that participants with inadequate housing situations have a different view on the issue, and/or that housing availability, type, and affordability are considered

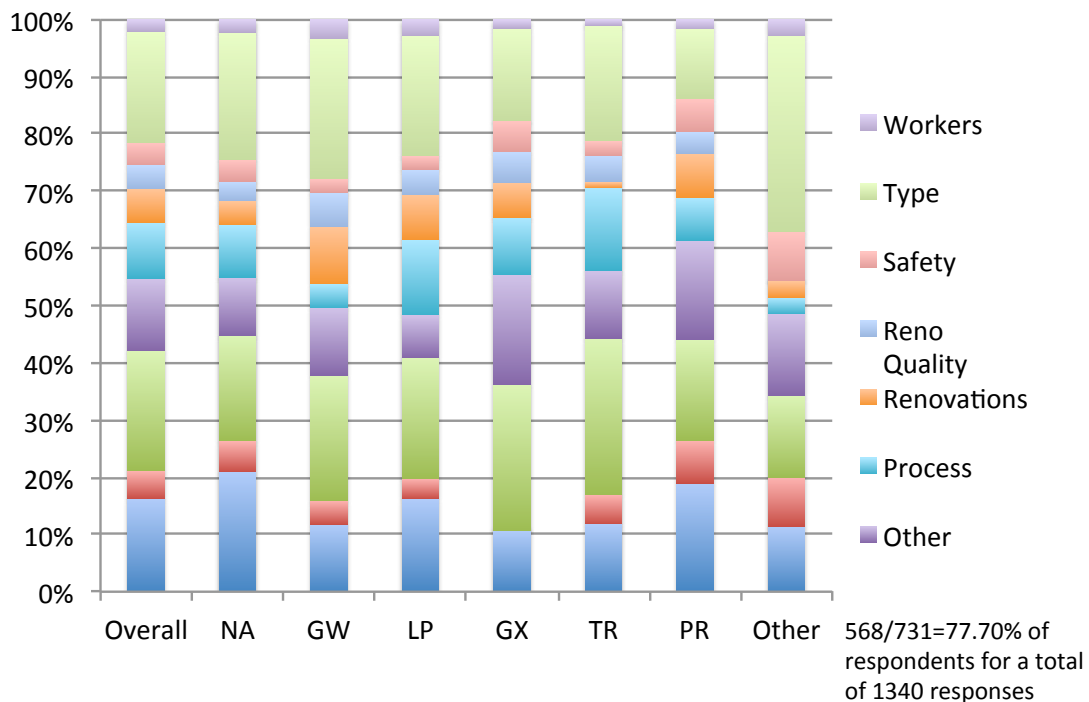


increasingly problematic issues for the future.

In addition, these findings are importantly linked on a few levels with results detailed in the employment section:

First, housing needs are congruent with the types of jobs participants would like to see in the Nass Valley, where 22% overall would like to see more trades. And second, a potentially insufficient number of Nisga'a people who would be willing to supply an increased demand for trade workers, since only 22.6% of people already trained in the trades would take work in the field if it existed and only 16% of our whole sample would retrain to enter trades.

## Desired Change in Housing



## 4.0 Health and Wellness

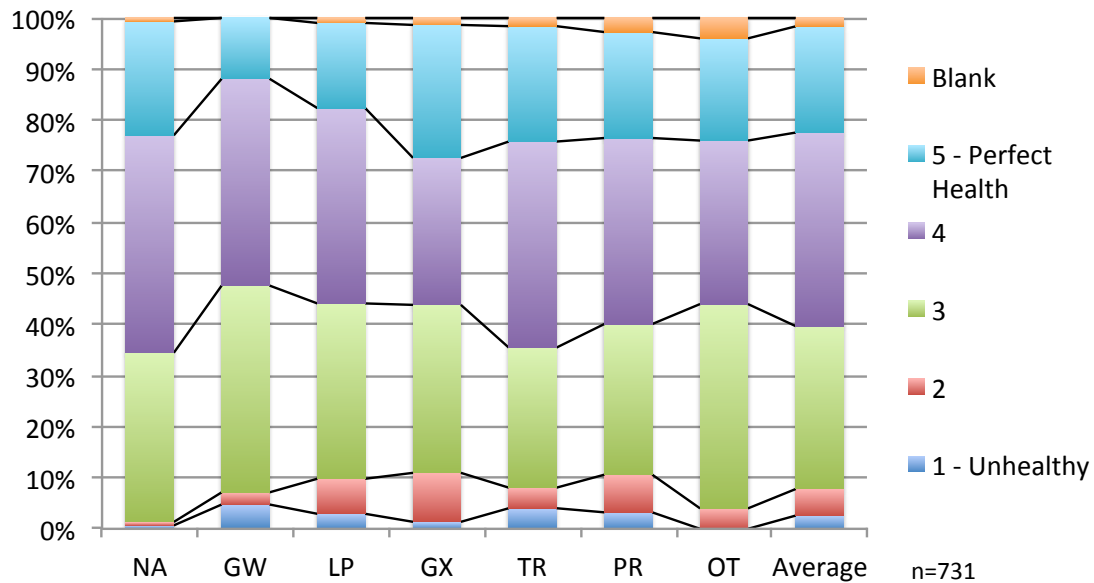
### 4.1 Current State of Health

With little variation across regions, a 58.7% majority of the Nisga'a people have rated their health at a strong 4 or 5, and 31.9% have rated their health at a moderate 3. However, this is a subjective opinion and people's standards of what constitutes good health could have multiple, potentially inaccurate measures; for example, someone is rarely sick (with any variation of illness) so they judge themselves as at least moderately healthy, but potentially they do not consider an unhealthy body mass index (BMI), lack of exercise, or an unhealthy diet.

Additionally, it is unlikely desired that such a large proportion of the Nisga'a people to be only moderately healthy, signifying there is still progress to be made for those individuals. Also, it is important to note that the number of participants who rated their health at a low 1 or 2 increase moving up the valley, cresting at almost 11% in Gingolx. This deterioration of health may warrant further monitoring or investigation, as it might be linked to problems in the delivery of healthcare or health education on multiple elements (diet, exercise, physiotherapy, facilities, health professionals, etc.).



## Rate your current state of health (5= perfect health -- 1= unhealthy)

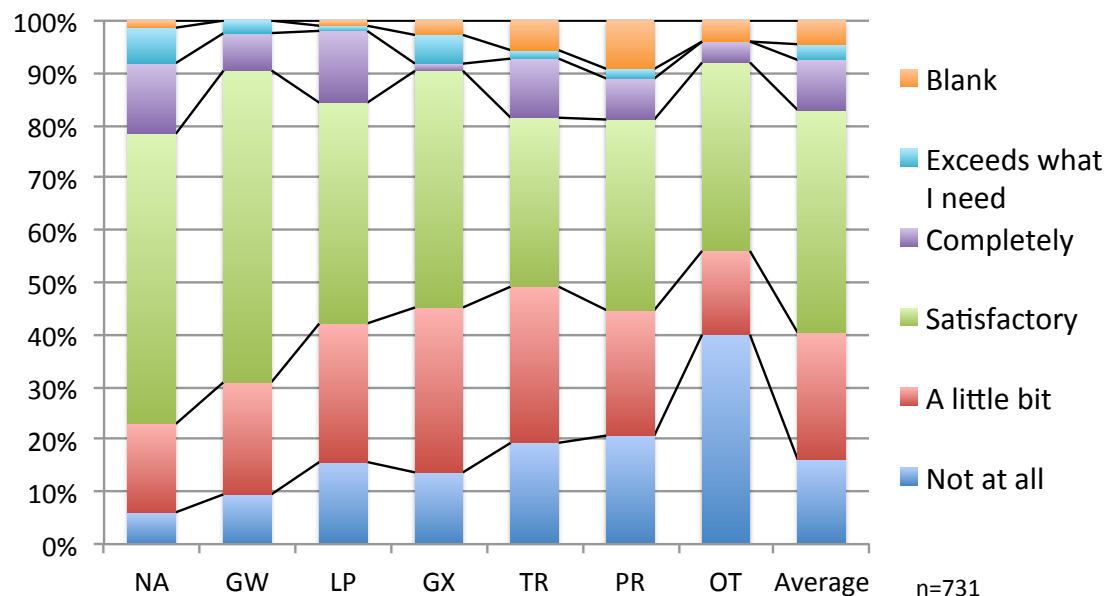


### 4.2 Confidence in Nass Valley's Healthcare Services

Participants' dissatisfaction with local health services' ability to meet their current needs increases moving down the Nass Valley; participants indicating healthcare services meet present needs "not at all" or "a little bit" begins at a 23% low in New Aiyansh and rises to a 44% high in Gingolx (higher still in Terrace at 48%).

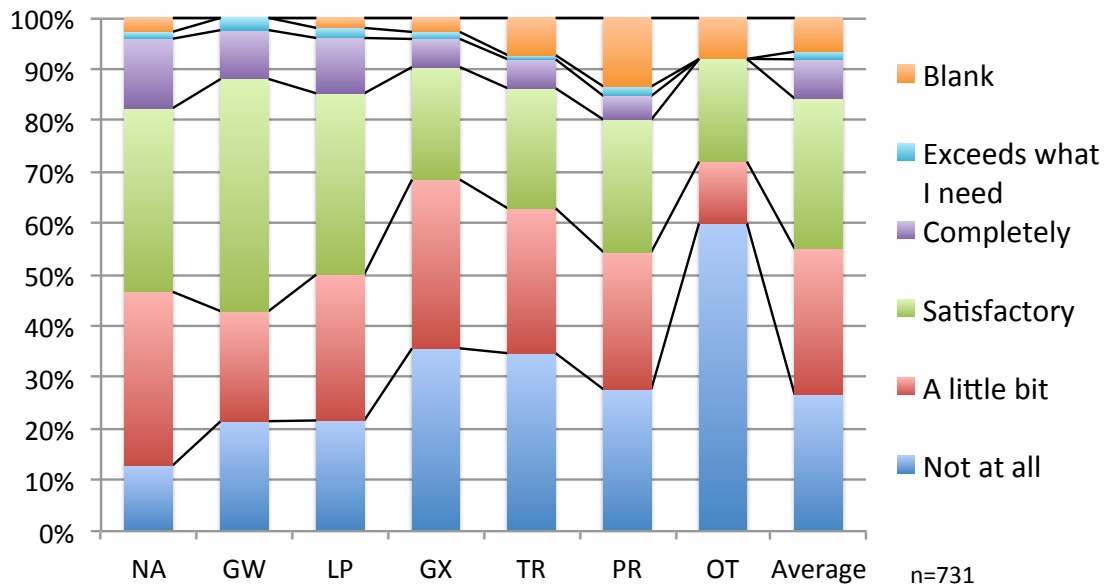


## Do Nass Valley health care services meet your present needs?



Looking forward, this failure of confidence in local healthcare is far more profound: Gitwinksihlkw reports the lowest total of “not at all” or “a little bit” at 43%, followed by New Aiyansh at 46%, and peaking in Gingolx (close to 68%). These results not only highlight the failure in people’s belief that local healthcare will be able to adapt to future needs, but also suggest that people believe their level of health will significantly decrease. Congruent with the issues and needs indicated in employment section on the increasing problems associated with both aging and young populations. There is a need for more follow-up to determine more specific information on why the citizens are not confident about their health services.

## Will Nass Valley health care services as they exist today meet your needs in ten years?



### 4.3 Best Attributes of Healthcare and Desired Change

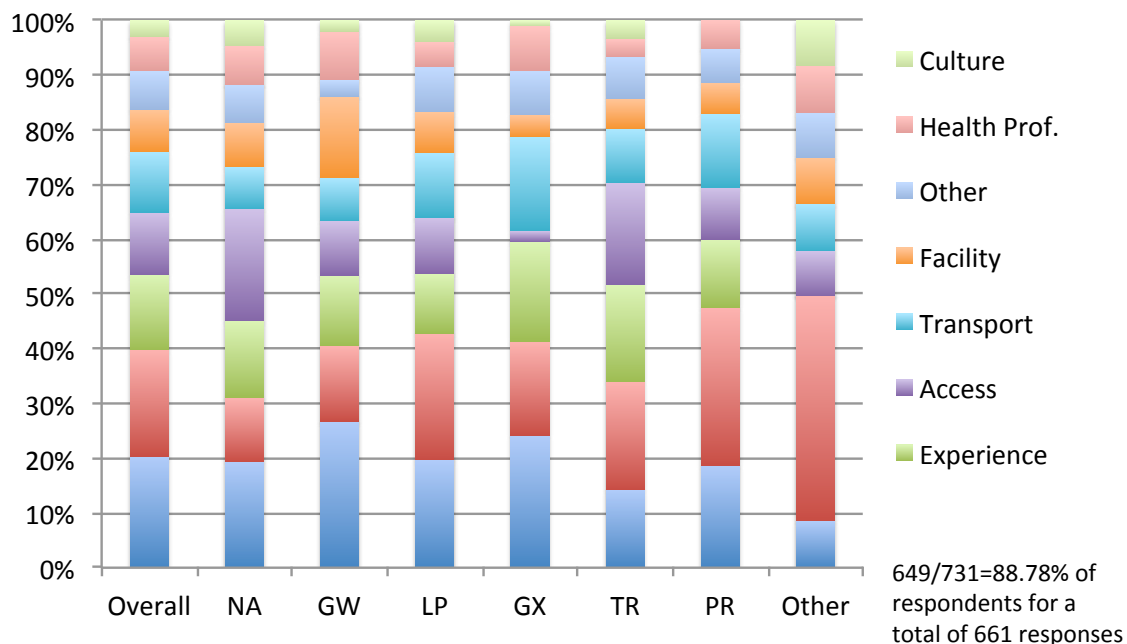
Overall “increase in medical and dental care” (20%), “medical coverage” (19%), and “patient experience” (13.5%) ranked as the top three attributes of healthcare in the Nass Valley, with relatively consistent proportions, across the Nass villages, Terrace and Prince Rupert. An encouraging message is given with these results because with their top answer, respondents indicate they recognize an improvement in the overall medical care they have received since the Nisga’a Final Agreement. However, interestingly enough this is not echoed in their



estimation of local healthcare’s ability to meet future needs. This may indicate an insufficient level of communication between the Nisga’a Valley Health Authority (NVHA), and the Nisga’a people regarding further changes or plans for improvement.

In addition, overall an “increase in health professionals” (6%), and “cultural understanding” (3%) consistently trail as attributes, and this perception is congruent with the changes to Nass healthcare desired by participants.

## Perceived Three Best Attributes of Health Care in the Nass Valley



Participants across all regions strongly desired an “increase in health professionals” (overall 30%), highest in Gingolx (40%) potentially due to its more isolated location area furthest down the valley. These results are especially



significant when combined with questions pertaining to employment, where only 2.6% of Nass people are employed in “health” and a low 8.1% average of participants indicated they would like to see more healthcare jobs in the Nass valley. A strong need for health professionals is recognized, but the internal desire to fill that need is not being generated, suggesting a serious need to develop a plan aimed at filling this gap amongst the Nisga’a people.

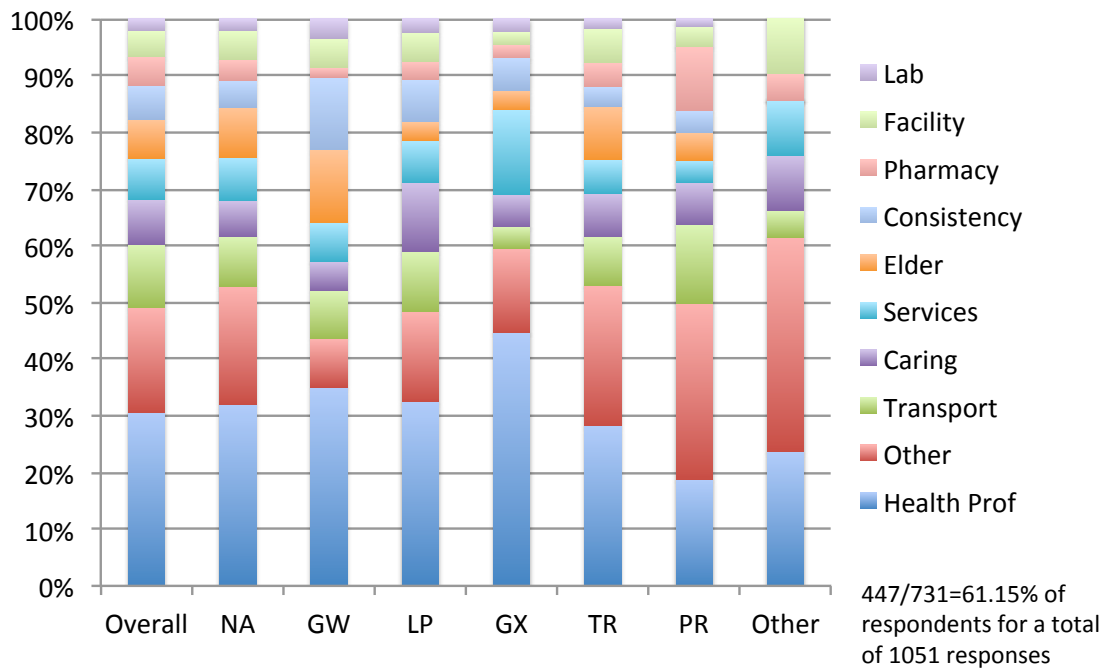
This gap is likely being fueled by the current negative confidence in healthcare discussed in above sections regarding whether Nass valley healthcare can meet current or future needs. In efforts to halt this failure of confidence and support change, any realistic plans to bolster or improve healthcare - whether they are aimed at present or future implementation - should be clearly communicated to the Nisga’a people. Furthermore, if possible, it may be highly beneficial to actively seek out feedback on proposed initiatives that would integrate and connect the public and future generations in support of this essential service.

Another observation that arises from the results of the two graphs is combination of overall low (3%) “cultural understanding” of health professionals and people’s (8%) desire to see the “caring and education of health professionals” increase. These results indicate that NVHA should consider plans aimed at increasing or promoting the cultural understanding and professional ability of the current workforce of healthcare professionals. This would support the deliverance of the level of caring, high quality service that would help increase people’s confidence in local healthcare and even inspire much needed youth to move into the health sector.





## Desired Change to Health Care



## 5.0 Culture

### 5.1 Nisga'a Language

About 35 years have passed since the Nisga'a convinced the BC Government to form the Nisga'a School District and incorporate instruction of Nisga'a Language as a routine feature of each child's education. Tremendous effort was put into developing curriculum and recruiting local instructors in Nisga'a language.

Training any group in a second language, especially one that they do not **have**

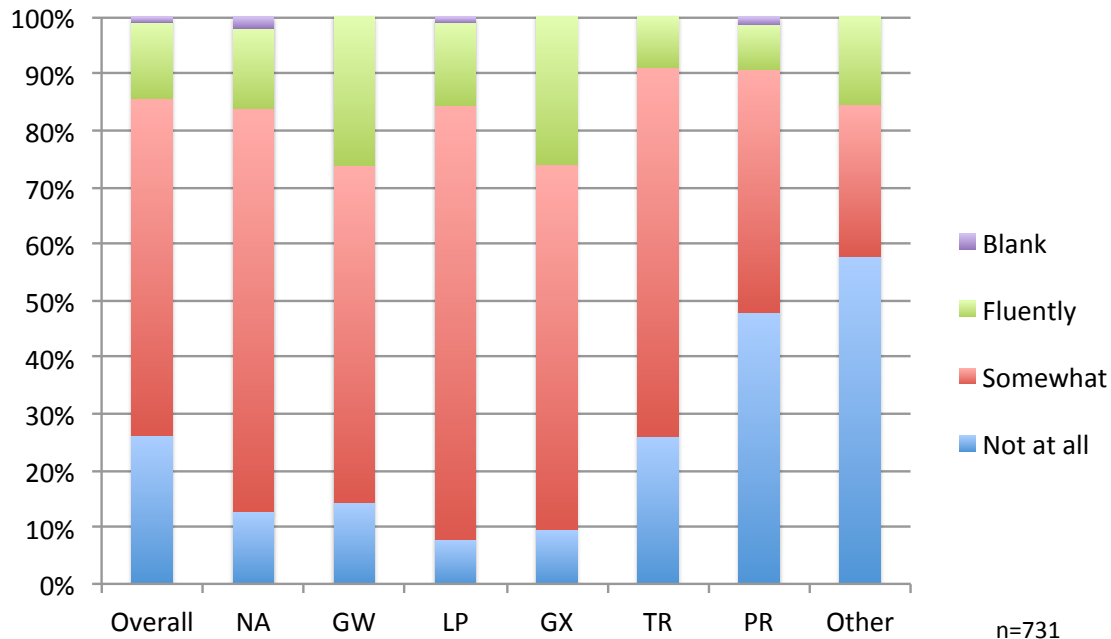


to know to survive, has been a major challenge to education. It is only recently that understanding of what **works** has come into focus. This involves short periods (3-4 months) of intensive, immersion instruction followed by language instruction at the level required to develop and maintain language skills. So the success demonstrated in this slide can be seen as quite impressive: about 26% of those responding in Gitwinksihlkw and Gingolx consider themselves fluent. That number drops to about 17% in New Aiyansh and Laxgalts'ap. And very impressive numbers understand the language "somewhat". The numbers who understand the language "not at all" are really quite low in the Valley (ranging from 7 to 14%). This should be considered a substantial success.

Outside the Nass, the proportion of participants who are fluent drops. Those who understand the language "somewhat" are in greater proportion in Terrace (we observe a special relationship between the Nisga'a in Terrace and those in the Nass in other areas of this report). An interesting observation is the relatively high proportion of people living away from the Northwest (16%). This is balanced by the highest proportion of those speaking the language "not at all" and the small proportion speaking Nisga'a "somewhat". It is presumed that the speakers are the family adults or elders and that the transfer of Nisga'a to the youth is not happening effectively. By contrast, a lower proportion of those living in Terrace speak Nisga'a fluently but a substantial proportion speak the language "somewhat". For context, Statistics Canada reports that about a quarter of First Nations peoples speak an indigenous language (how fluently is not specified) and only 15% report speaking their language at home. These statistics would likely put the Nisga'a in the relative forefront in the mastery of their language. But three quarters of the Inuit are reported to be able to hold a conversation in Inuktitutuk, which is the best example of the survival of an indigenous language in Canada.



## Do you understand the Nisga'a language?



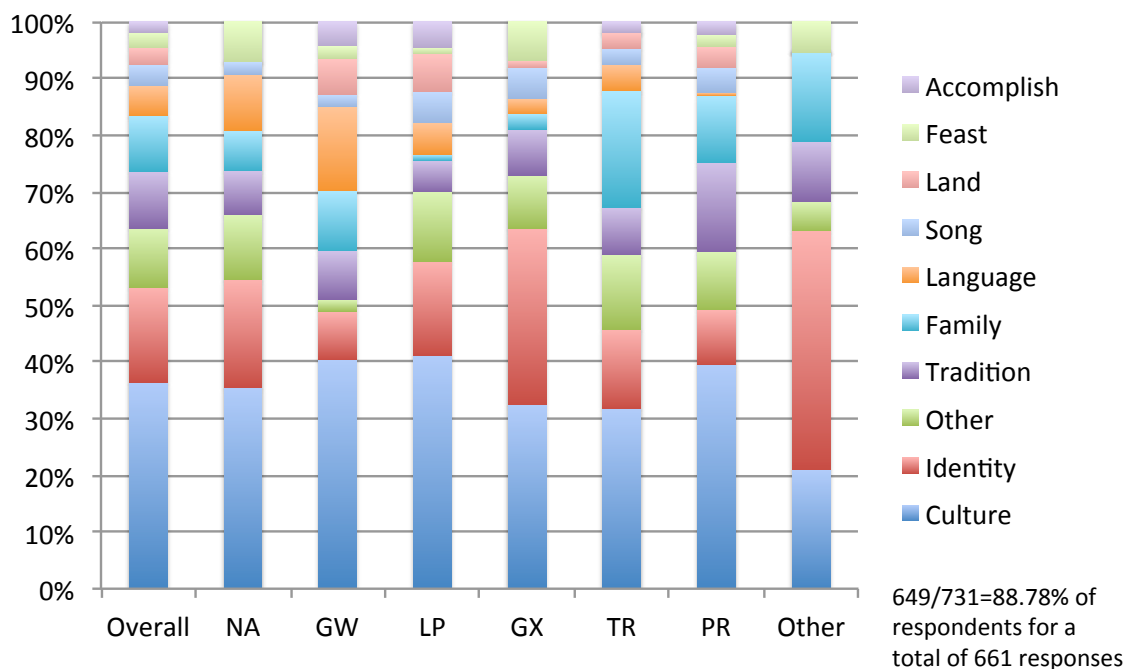
### 5.2 Pride in Nisga'a Culture

It is probably accurate to characterize the Nisga'a as a proud people. We asked what specifically they are proud of. Most of our respondent volunteered at least one factor (there were 661 identified by 731 respondents). "Culture" and "identity" are prominent pieces in this sense of Nisga'a pride. "Culture" stands top of list at 36% across the participant sample. It is particularly strong in Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap, and interestingly Prince Rupert at 40+% of the sources of pride reported. "Identity", which is simultaneously hard to define but powerfully felt, is particularly salient amongst those in Gingolx and those living outside the Northwest, both perhaps people's who have struggled to maintain



their survival as cultural entities. “Tradition” ranges from about 5 to 15% as a spontaneously offered basis of pride. The language is a source of pride in New Aiyansh and particularly in Gitwinksihlkw. Such as feast, cultural activities are important for all Nisga’a and respondents from New Aiyansh and Gingolx emphasized this.

## What are you most proud of as a Nisga’a?



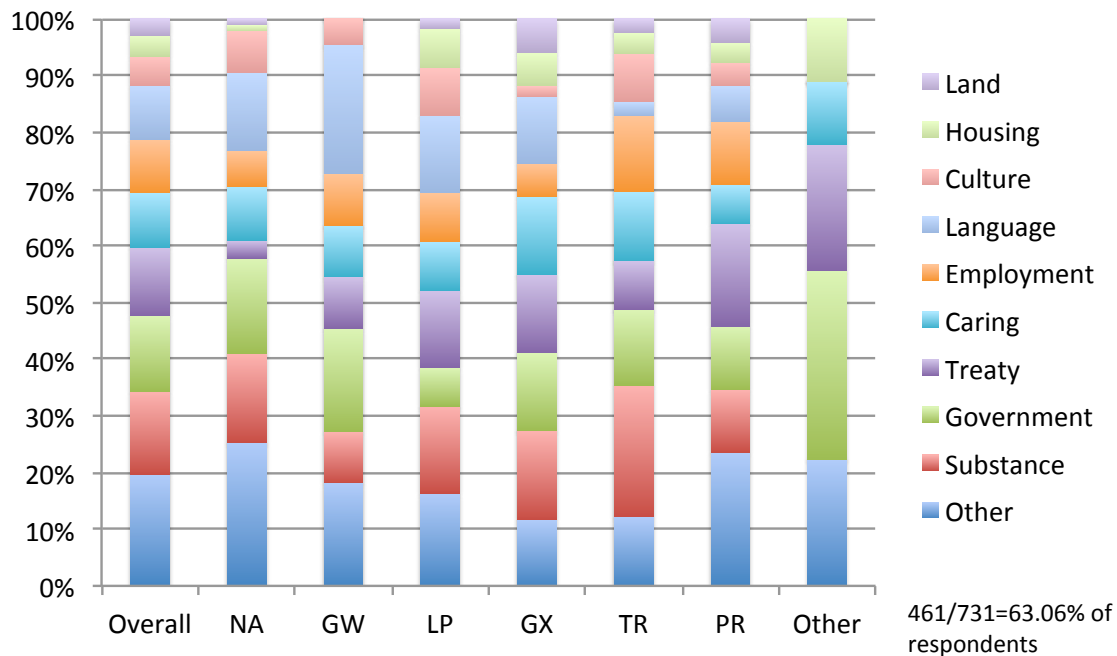
If pride is an important positive support to a people, the things we are least proud of are often the factors that undermine our success. It is impressive that there were only 70% as many negative factors identified, as there were sources of pride in the preceding question. We present comments and percentages as a portion of the total number of comments offered by the sample. As there were a total of 462 things that respondents were “least proud of” out of a total of 731



respondents and some people offered more than one, these percentages have to be softened somewhat. This means that if we converted the following numbers to “percent of total respondents” they would be substantially lower. “Other” leads the list at almost 20% of the comments made (12.3% of the total sample made this comment) which speaks to there being a variety of individually relevant issues of concern. Overall, five common factors were volunteered at rates that should concern us: substance abuse (14.5% of comments, 9.2% of respondents made this comment), government/taxes/funding (13.2% of comments, 8.3% of respondents), losing status and the treaty (11.9% and 7.5%), lack of caring and negative attitudes (9.5% and 6%), employment and education (9.3% and 5.9%), and not knowing the language (9.3% and 5.9%). So things of which respondents are least proud (could we say “are ashamed of”?) are shared by a relatively small portion of respondents but are none-the-less issues that call for attention. Looking at this data from the local perspective we can probably identify some issues that stand out. Substance abuse was of least concern to those in Gitwinksihlkw (2 of 23 comments) but of more concern in New Aiyansh, Laxgalts’ap, Gingolx, and especially Terrace. Government, taxes, and funding issues were salient in New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, and especially beyond the Northwest (distance in this case not making the heart grow fonder). Treaty and status concerns were lowest in New Aiyansh, higher in Laxgalts’ap and Gingolx and both Prince Rupert and beyond the Northwest.



## What are you least proud of as a Nisga'a?

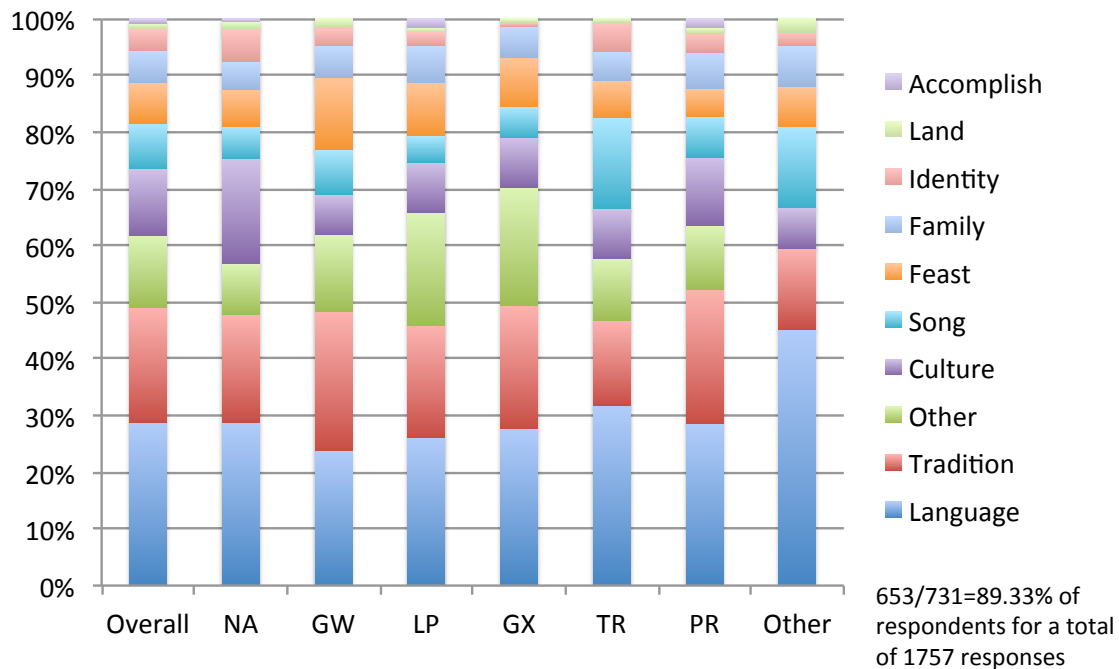


When considering hopes for passing on knowledge about their culture to the next generation there were far more comments made that either of the preceding two questions. In this case, 731 people offered a total of 1757 things they wanted passed on (2.4 per person on average). Language tops the list at 28.7% of comments. This means that 69% of respondents volunteered “language” as an important feature of Nisga’a culture. Language tied with “tradition” in Gitwinksihlkw but topped the list in the rest of the Nass and in Terrace (at 32% more evidence of Terrace’s special relationship with the Nass), Prince Rupert, and beyond the Northwest (accounting for 43% of the things that group hoped would not be lost). Otherwise, tradition came second (or a close third outside the Northwest). “Culture” slipped into a shabby third or fourth place. Feasting, which



is still such an integral part of Nisga'a memorial and wedding celebration, had a smaller but consistent representation in respondent's comments, as did "family".

## What do you hope that the next generation of Nisga'a will know about their culture?



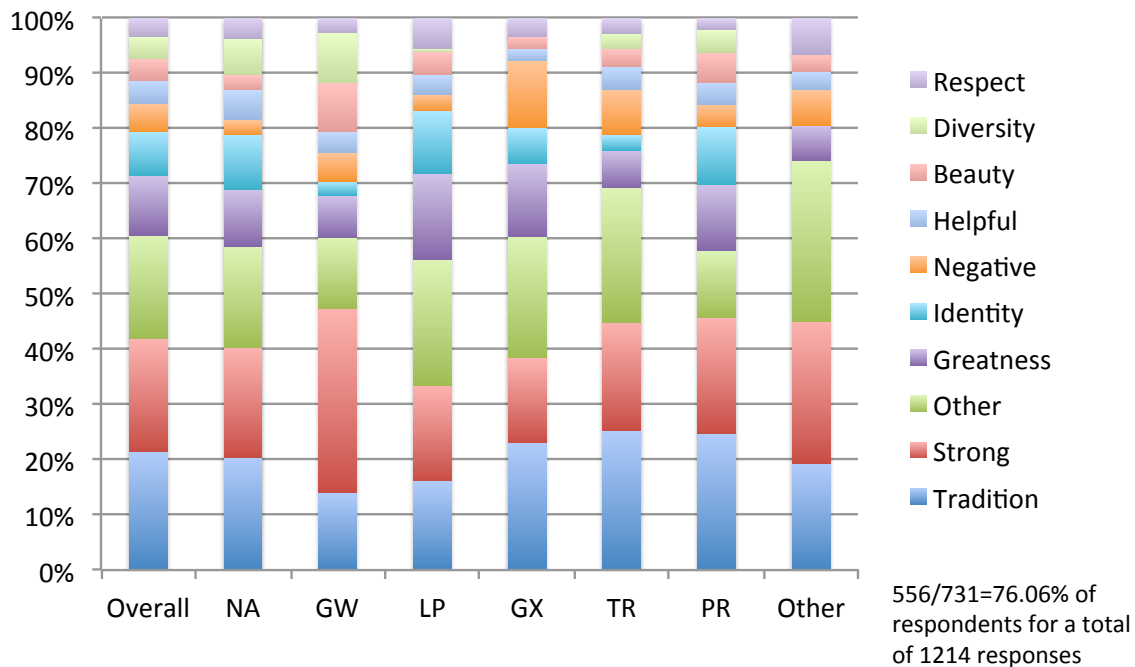
When asked to describe Nisga'a culture, our sample was slightly less voluble (still 1214 ideas generated by the 731 respondents, or 1.7 per person).

"Tradition" and "strong" bounce about for first place (and they are noted in 22% and 20% of the total number of comments and by 36% and 34% of the sample respectively). "Greatness" was voiced in every site at levels between 6 and 15% of all comments (and found in 18% of survey forms). "Identity" varies wildly between survey sites. And so we do not get too carried away with positive qualities, "losing positive characteristics" appeared in 5% of all factors identified (and 8% of respondents). It can be seen that a subsample of respondents are



concerned at the loss of Nisga'a culture. Overall, there appears to be confidence in the strength and resilience of this culture and in its bright future.

## How would you describe the Nisga'a culture?



## 6.0 Education

### 6.1 Elementary and Secondary Schooling

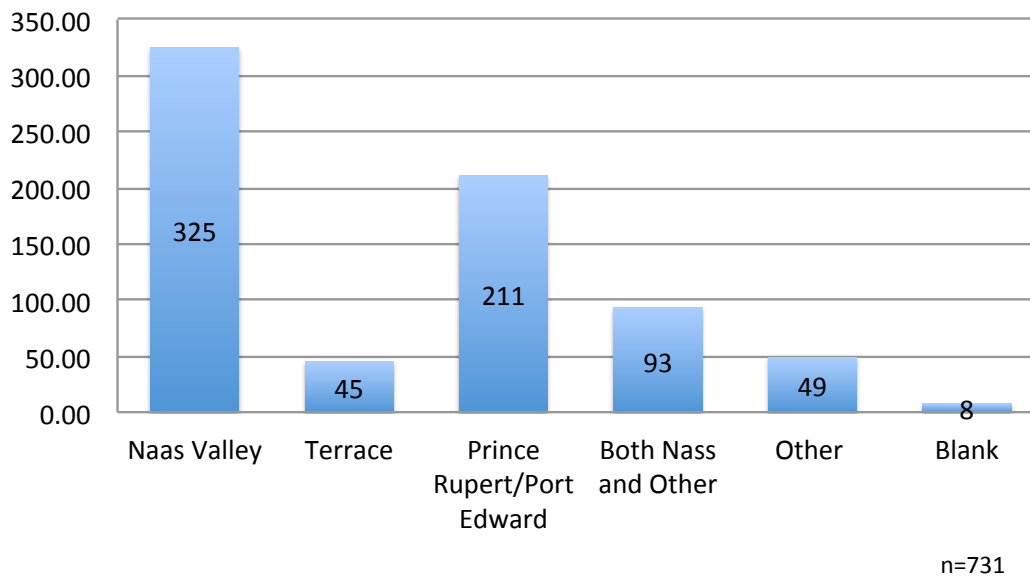
The foundation of education is laid in the early years. Of our total sample of 731 participants, more than half (418 or 57%) went to elementary school on the Nass (44% were only on the Nass and 13% were on the Nass for some of that period). Terrace was the place where 6% (45) of our participants attended while 29%





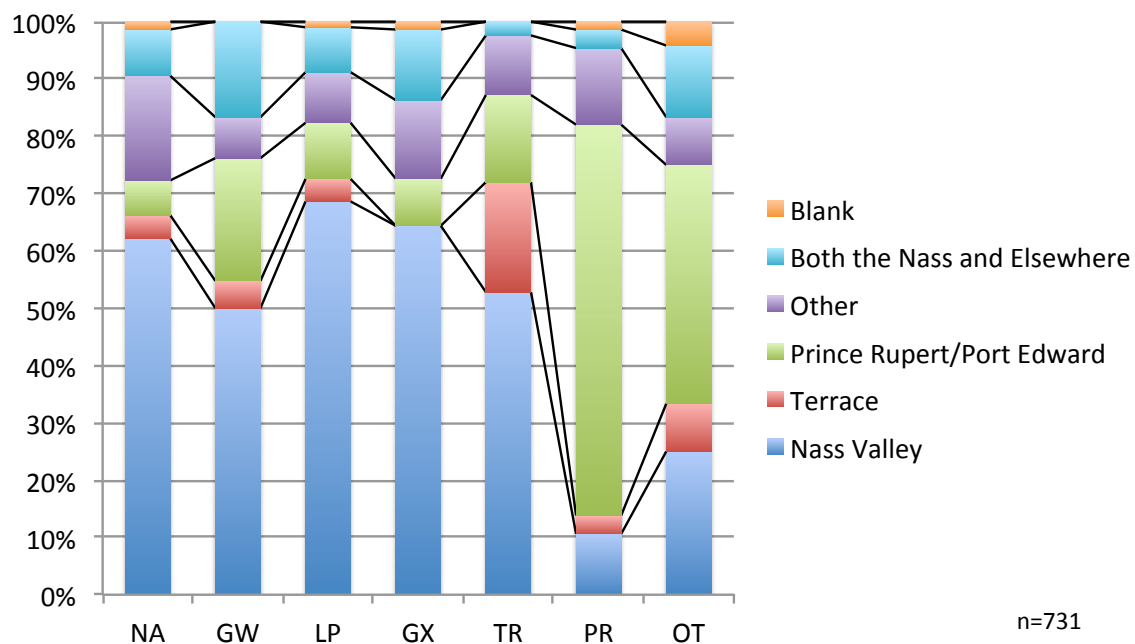
(211) attended in Prince Rupert/Port Edward. This means that a substantial portion of our sample spent at least some of their formative years in the Nass Valley. The flip side of this is that fully 43% have not spent their early years on the Nass or if they did, it was as visitors. This must have an important impact as place is such an important component of personal identity, particularly in the early years. And as the land is a huge contributor to Nisga'a identity and culture this proportion of the people forming their identities outside the Nass must have an impact.

## Where did you attend elementary school?



When we look at where people are living now as compared with where they went to elementary school, we see that people who went to elementary school on the Nass are most likely still living there. Those in Terrace commonly will move back and forth into the Nass Valley (over half of those who live in Terrace went to elementary school on the Nass). The vast majority of those who live in Prince Rupert or Port Edward went to school there. These people are likely going to be harder to draw back into major engagement in economic development and educational opportunities on the Nass.

## Current Address vs Where You Attended Elementary School

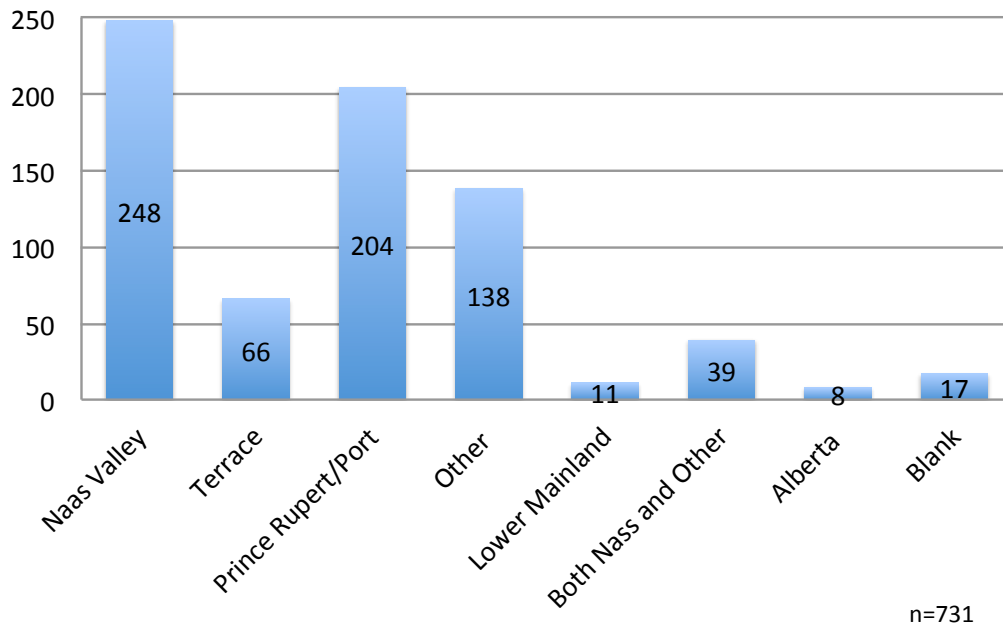


By secondary school we see the evidence of migration from the Nass. Only 34% of respondents went to high school on the Nass. As high school means a journey out of three of the four villages, it also creates a choice point as to



whether that journey ends up in New Aiyansh or another relatively friendly place like Terrace or Port Edward. Prince Rupert/Port Edward was home for 28% of our high schoolers (the same proportion as for elementary education). The category of “other” at 19% is a bit mysterious and may represent people who spent some of their high school years in more than one location.

## Where did you attend secondary school?

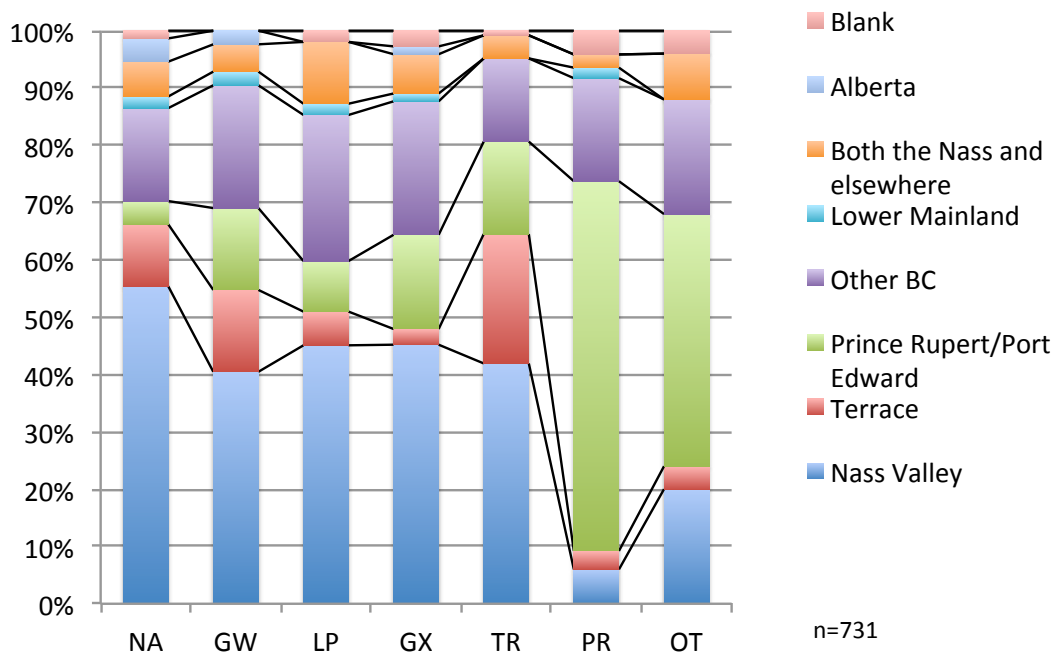


When we asked people living in our various survey sites where they got their high school education, we received essentially the same picture we got for elementary education. People tend to stay where they were educated on the Nass. Terrace presents a special case where many (42%) went to high school on the Nass. Conversely, sizeable numbers in New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw went to high school in Terrace. Prince Rupert has a small number of people who went to



high school on the Nass, but a substantial number of people living in Terrace and along the Nass (excepting New Aiyansh) got their high school education in Prince Rupert or Port Edward. Even more people currently living in any of our survey sites went to high school somewhere else in BC. Of all the villages, New Aiyansh holds the highest proportion (54%) of its high schoolers in residence as adults. When we looked at the portion of the respondents in New Aiyansh who went to elementary school there we found a lower proportion. So a lot happens in terms of mobility in the early years. By the time families have teenage kids they appear more likely to settle into an area.

## Current Address vs Where You Attended Secondary School

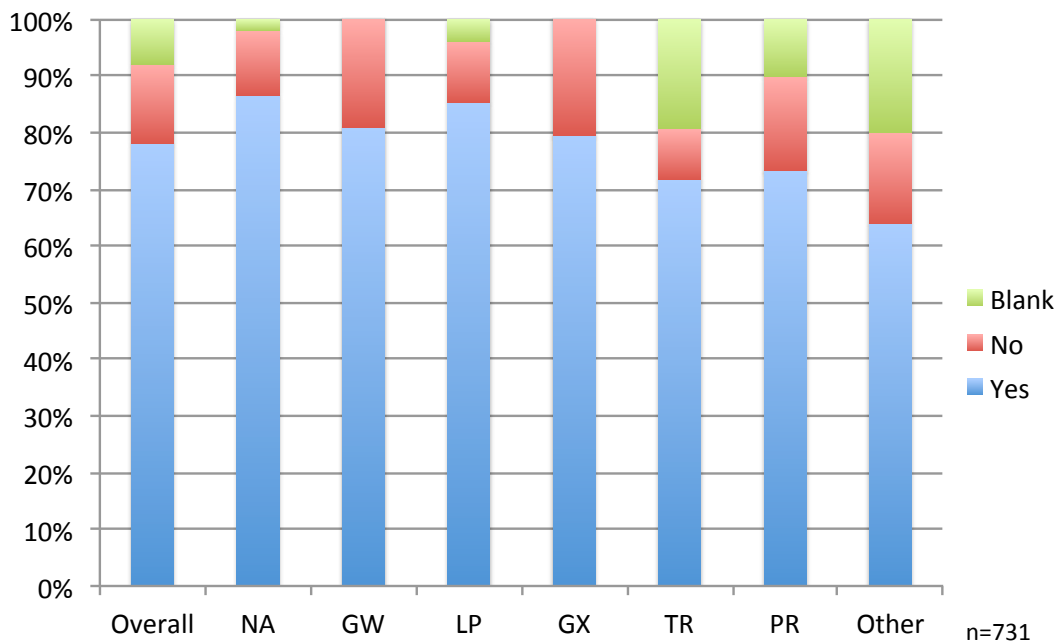


As noted in the previous section on Employment (and in this graph which has already been presented), the overwhelming majority of respondents want to



upgrade their skills within the next five years. This proportion drops by approximately 8 –16% outside the Nass, but 64% or more are still eager to upgrade.

## Do you wish to upgrade your skills in the next 5 years?

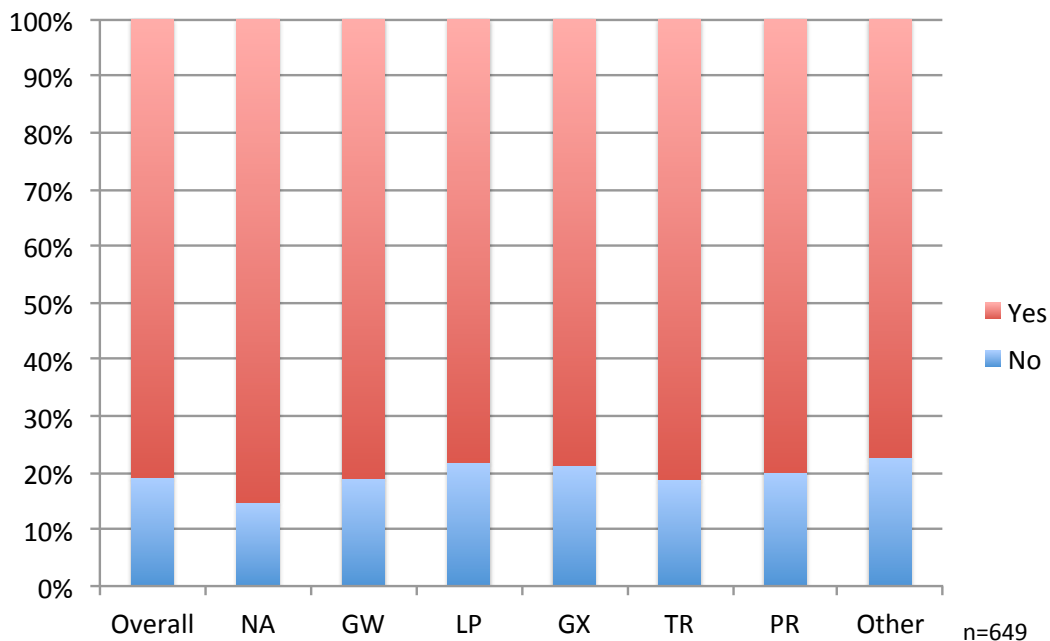


There is somewhat of a disconnect between the interest in upgrading expressed in the foregoing chart and the perception participants share in this chart. Only about 20% of respondents think that they do not have the skills necessary to comfortably perform their jobs. Clearly the intensity of interest in continuing education occurs along a continuum. What we have identified here are perhaps the most highly motivated learners we could have: few sources of motivation for upgrading skills are stronger than the perception that you do not have what is

required to effectively and happily do your job.

## 6.2 Job Skill Requirements and Further Education

Do your current skills meet the requirements for your employment? (blanks removed)



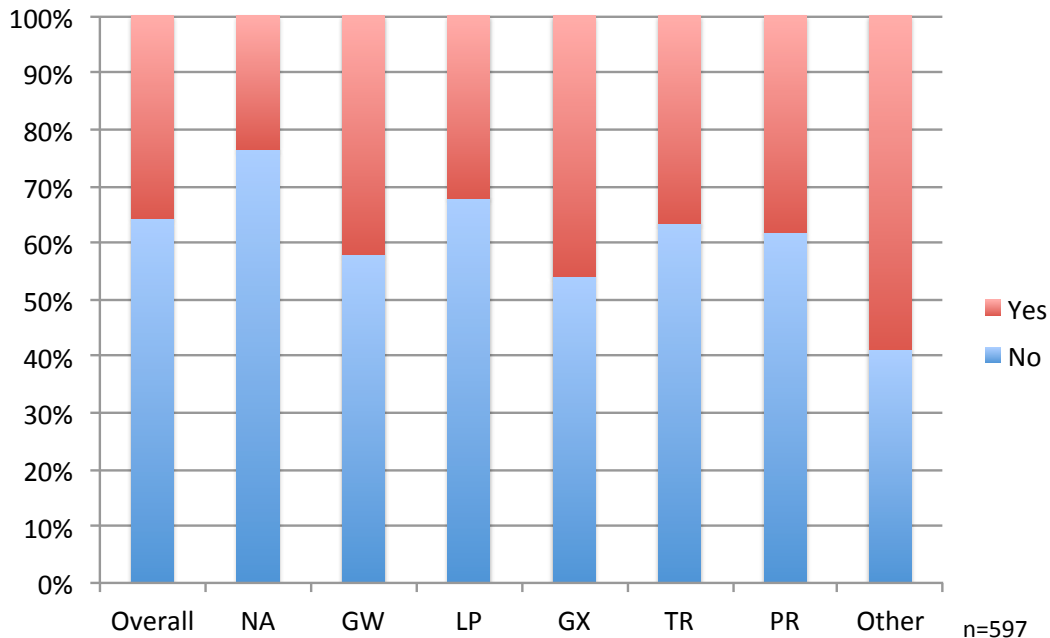
## 6.2 Job Skill Requirements and Further Education

Everywhere except beyond the Northwest more than half (up to 76%) of employers do not provide the means to upgrade job skills. This begs for the innovation of programs to support job-relevant learning. However it does not tell us what sorts of learning needs to be supported, nor the format that would be most effective. Courses may be needed, but the need may be for broad work-



related literacies, more effective initial training, or perhaps mentoring systems.

## Does your current employer provide on the job training? (blanks removed)



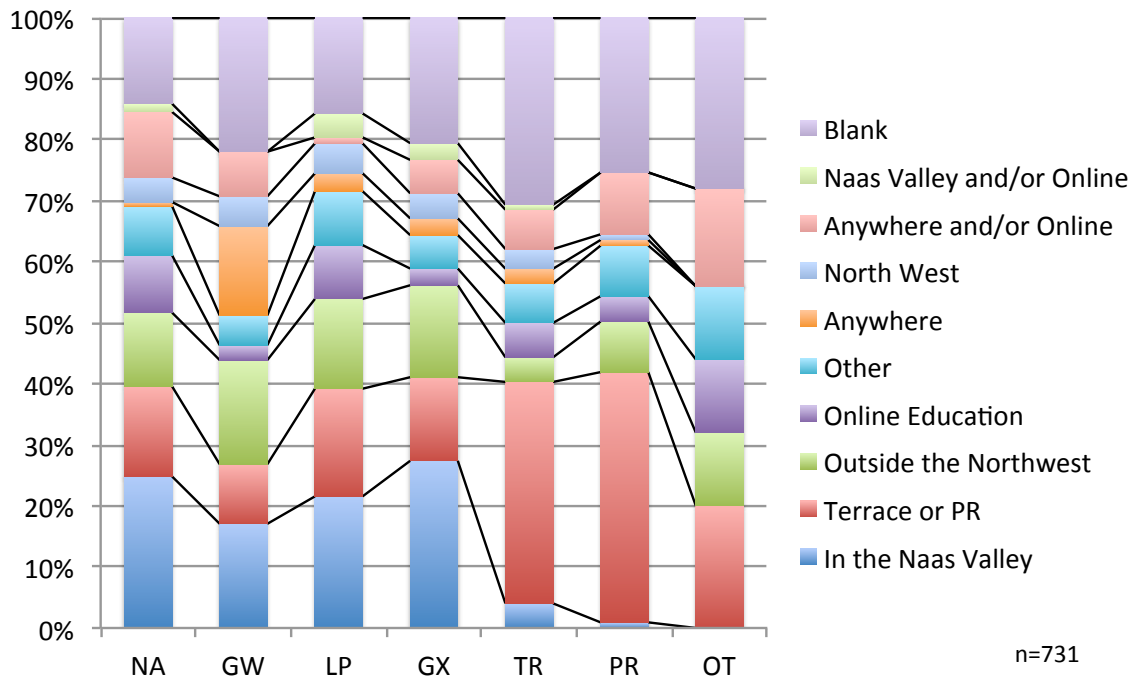
When asked where they would like to do their education/retraining only a small number of those living on the Nass would prefer training where they live (a high of 34% in Gingolx and a low of 22% in Gitwinksihlkw). However, the majority of those living in Terrace or Prince Rupert would choose to stay home for their retraining. It seems that retraining is seen by many on the Nass as an opportunity to leave the Valley, almost equally to go to Terrace/Prince Rupert or to leave the Northwest. There appears to be a very modest interest in internet-based training whatever their home base. This flies in the face of the current movement towards distributive learning whether through internet or paper-based courses. A substantial portion of the sample is open to training wherever and



however it is offered. We will later report on the general dissatisfaction with educational options in the Valley. This has to influence interest in training where you live, whether in class, by paper-based courses, or via the internet. It must be presumed that improving the relevance and effectiveness of training and education on the Nass will dramatically increase interest in training where you live.



## Where would you like to train?



Respondents were asked “Have you attended WWNI (Wilp Wilxo’oskwhl Nisga’a Institute)?” About 22% overall answered “yes”. Along the Nass we see an impressive 43% in New Aiyansh and an even greater 45% in Gitwinksihlkw have attended courses at WWNI. This falls off to 29% in Laxgalts’ap and lowers still (14%) in Gingolx. The Terrace sample WWNI attendance climbs to 19%,

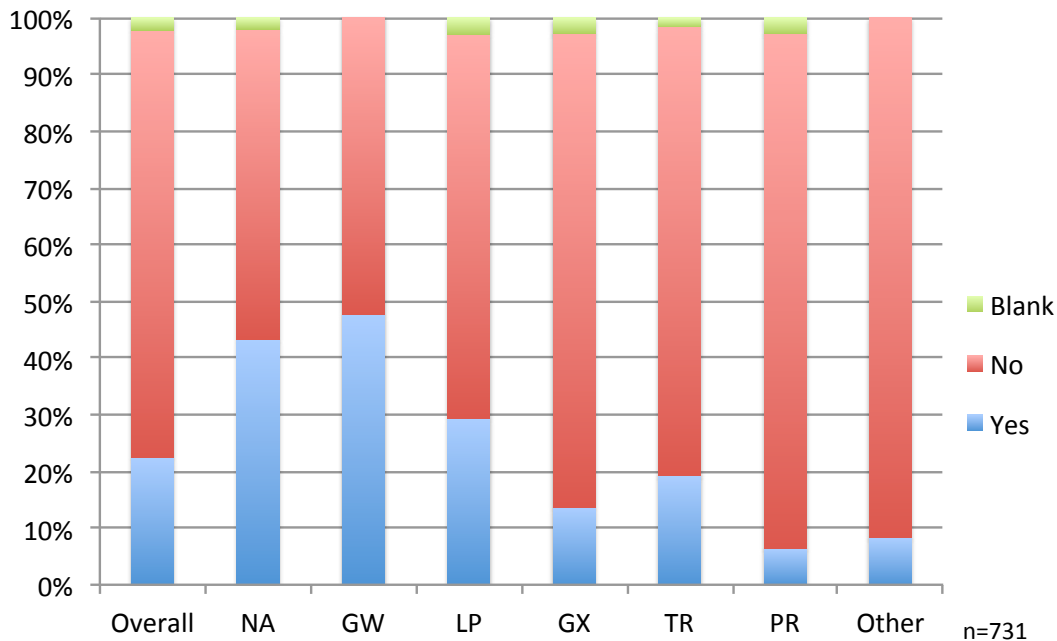




which is yet more evidence of their relative integration into Nass institutions. But in Prince Rupert and beyond attendance falls off the scale at 6 and 8%. This is support for increasing the reach of WWNI programs and services, and another example of issues with providing services and support to the whole Nisga'a Nation despite geographic and historic challenges.



## Have you attended WWNI (Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute)?



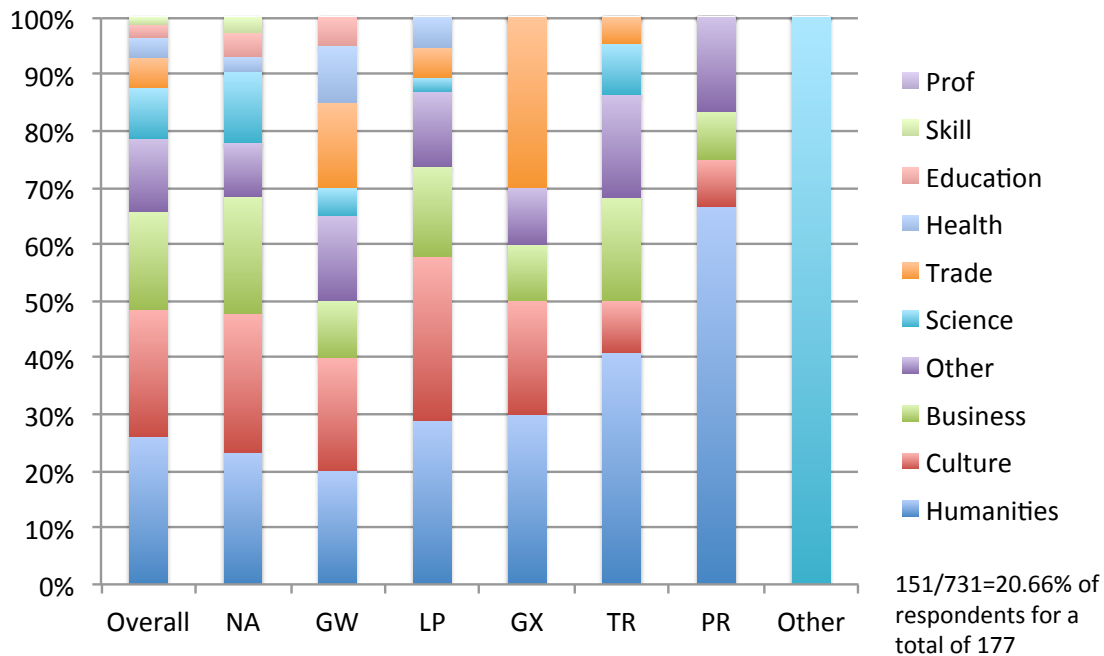
One hundred and seventy seven people of our total sample of 731 have taken courses with WWNI (almost one quarter of our participants). “Humanities” tops the list at 25% of all courses taken but varies widely across our sample sites



peaking at 67% in Prince Rupert, 40% in Terrace, 30% in Gingolx, and 29% in Laxgalts'ap. "Culture" is second overall (21%) with higher participation in Laxgalts'ap (29%) and New Aiyansh (25%). Attendance in business programs is strong overall (16%) but highly variable across our survey sites. Something that pops out is the 100% for "science" that is found in people outside the Northwest, but in fact this represents only two students.



## Which courses/programs participants have taken at WWNI



### 6.3 Satisfaction with Nass Valley Educational Services

These findings on the level of participation in WWNI raise the next question: to what extent are educational services on the Nass meeting your current needs? Now, we must be clear that this is asking about the whole educational



complement of the Nass, not specifically WWNI. Overall, we see disappointment in offerings on the Nass: 62% are satisfied either “not at all” or “a little bit”. This number is inflated a bit by the strong dissatisfaction in Terrace (76% “not at all” or “a little bit”), but it is not terribly discrepant from the ratings in the other three Nass villages (54% in New Aiyansh, 60% in Gitwinksihlkw, 57% in Laxgalts’ap, and 56% in Gingolx). As any educator will immediately tell you, let’s look at the bright side. The cumulative positive ratings (“satisfactory” to “exceeds what I need”) are a solid base to improve from: 30% overall (largely drawn down by ratings of 19% in each of Terrace and Prince Rupert and 24% beyond the Northwest), 44% in New Aiyansh, 41% in Gitwinksihlkw, 41% in Laxgalts’ap, and 39% in Gingolx. While these ratings leave lots of room for growth, they speak volumes. Education on the Nass has evolved from a highly paternalistic and in some cases abusive circumstance just 35 years ago into something that resembles the state of satisfaction with education in many other communities. For additional context, the latest survey of BC high school students found that 38% of grade 10 students and 41% of grade 12 students were satisfied with what they were learning. The 2003 paper “BC College and Institute Student Outcomes: Understanding Student Satisfaction” made the following wise comments:

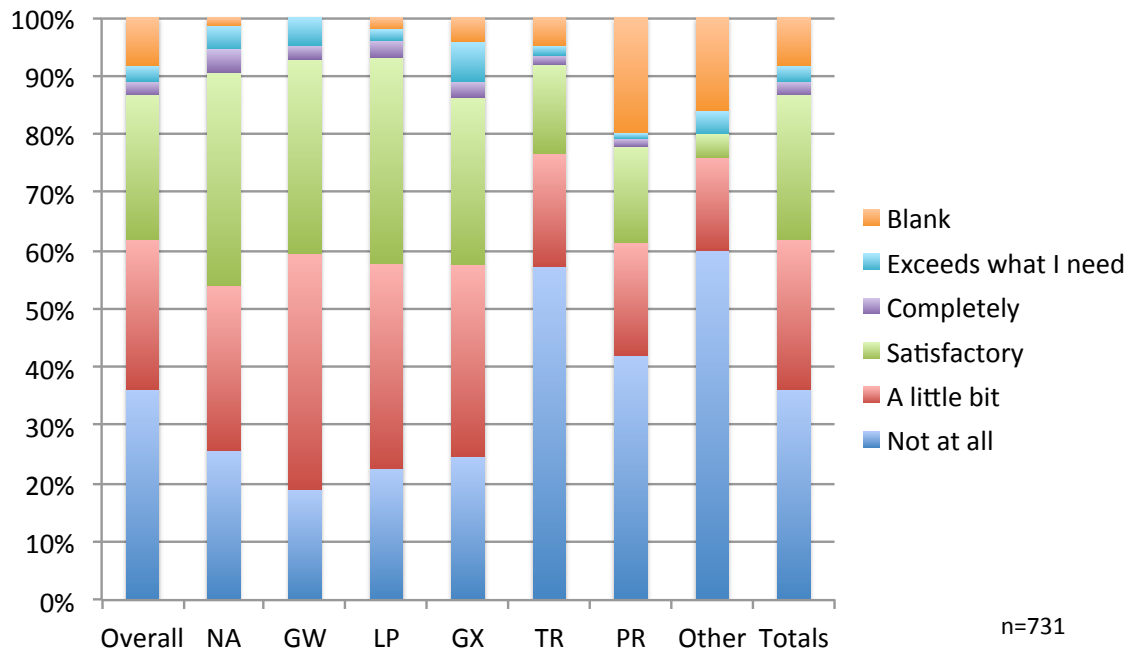
“The conclusions of Former students who report that they were satisfied with their college, university college, and institute studies are also likely to report that they achieved their main objective for enrolling. As well, they are likely to say their studies prepared them for employment or further education. These items, combined into a single measure of satisfaction, align well with other measures of a successful academic experience—GPA and credential completion, for example. Analysis of the ratings given to programs and other aspects of the educational experience showed that satisfaction with curriculum—curriculum content, organization, and relevance—is a critical dimension of former students’



overall satisfaction. Providing students with a curriculum that achieves high approval ratings should promote high satisfaction ratings. Further, focusing on high quality instruction and creating opportunities for students to develop their analytical skills could also help institutions to maintain high levels of student satisfaction. A good part of students' expression of satisfaction is related to factors other than the educational experience itself; there are demographic characteristics and outcomes that can influence satisfaction levels. Older students, females, and those from health-related programs tend to say they were more satisfied—having a training-related job shows the strongest effect. Although these factors are outside the direct control of post-secondary institutions, using them in the analysis contributes to an understanding of what makes students satisfied.”



## Extent to which the Education Service in the Nass Valley Meets Your Needs

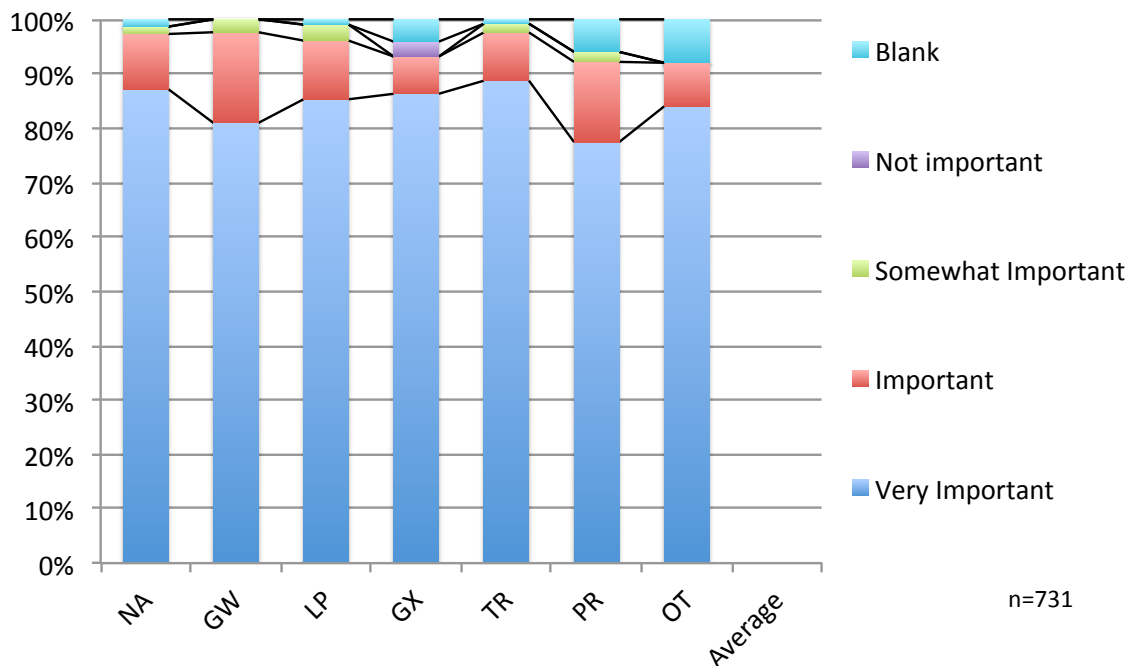


One truism of adult education is that learners want their time to be used in the most efficient and effective way possible. A second is that it ought to be practical and useful. That is reflected in the following chart where 77 – 88% of respondents say that it is “very important” that work they do in courses and programs be portable, recognized beyond the institutions in which they earn them. This expectation is commonly encountered in very focused training settings like BCIT and reflects an expectation that education is a tool for advancement. And “advancement” often means getting a better job or opening the door to work that would otherwise be closed. While this opinion needs to be recognized and efforts made where appropriate, to seek articulation



agreements with at least BC colleges, universities, and training institutions, the broader roles of education need also to be valued. This will take place as educational programs in the Nass mature and as the public gains a respect for the potential and broad benefits of learning. Also, some of this will occur as Nisga'a values and ways of learning are valued and integrated into mainstream education on the Nass. The example discussed of the effectiveness of integration of Nisga'a language into grade school education should give optimism for the evolution of education on the Nass.

## Importance that courses/programs be recognized

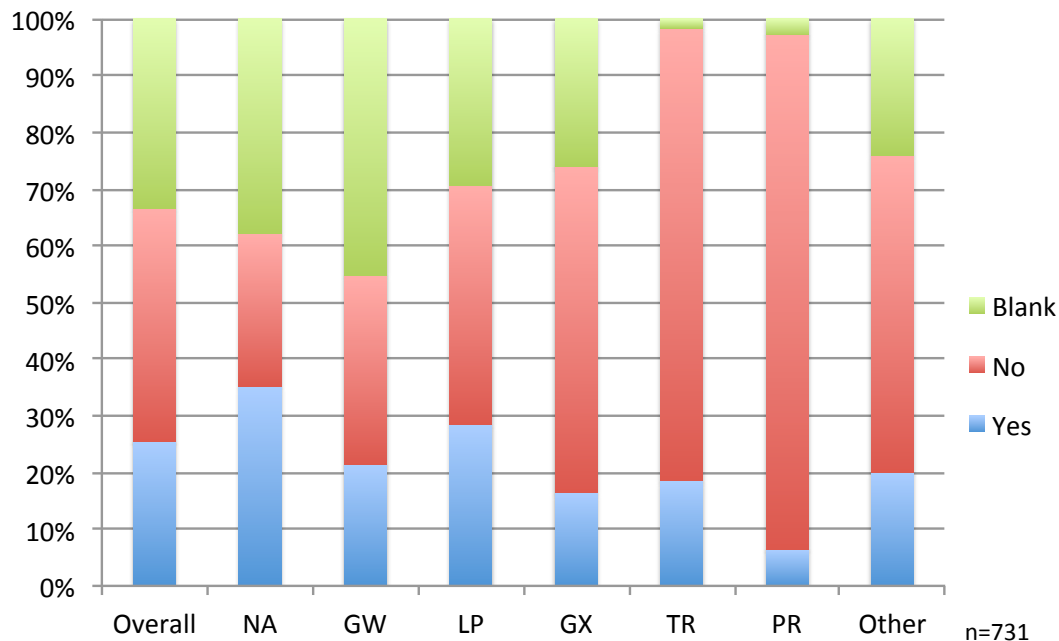


The next chart (3-5C) asks the question “are you working in the field you were trained for?” Before we discuss the answer, we need to make a few comments. The first is that respondents generally mistook this question (are you working in the field that your **post-secondary** training prepared you for) and answered as if it referred to any training, including we presume high school. We say this because 20% of respondents said “yes” which would likely be a high portion of the working population that would have attended post-secondary education of some sort including trades apprenticeship. About 61% said “no” implying that they also had attended post-secondary training, which gets us to an 81% post-secondary attendance rate. And only 19% declined to respond, leaving the question blank. Those blanks were removed, as they do not add any information. Given that, we see the lament of everyone who actually did pursue training: about 24% overall are working in the field of their perceived training. But an interesting trend is also observed: from 56% of respondents in New Aiyansh who are doing what they trained to do, to a tiny 6% in Prince Rupert. Gingolx, at 22%, is the low point on the Nass in correspondence between training and work roles. What issue of sense of order or malaise, or relevance of education this speaks to is not clear.

#### 6.4 Linking Education to Employment



## Are you now employed in the field you trained for post secondary?



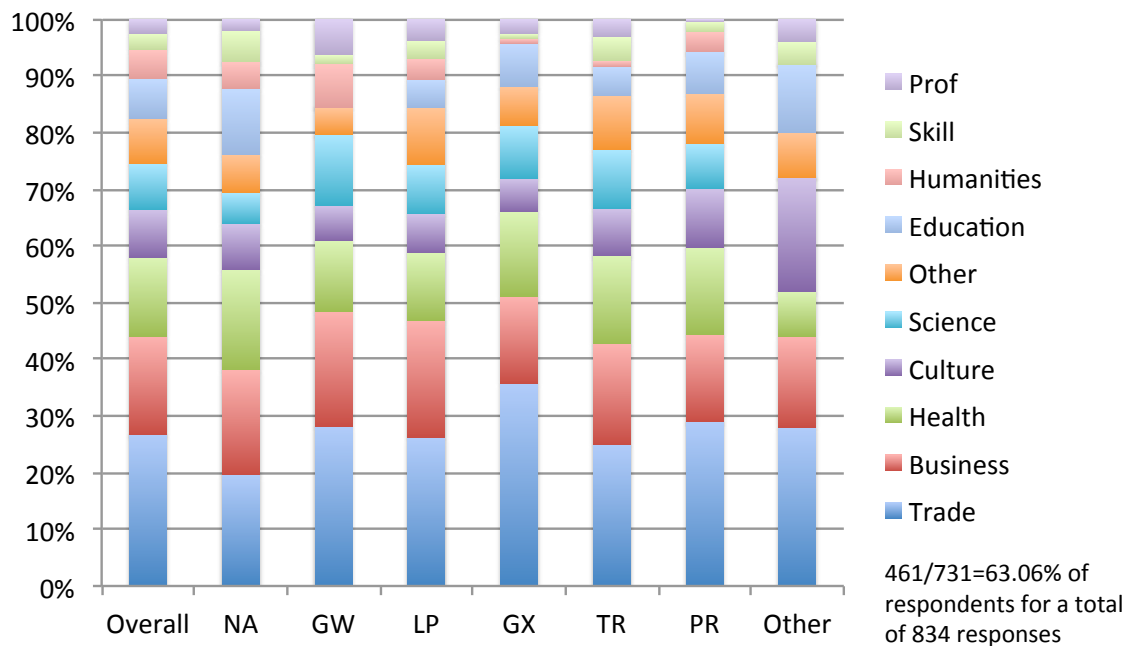
Respondents are clear and consistent across survey sites on the top three sets of courses and training they want to see offered in the Nass Valley: trades, business, and health (at 27%, 18%, and 14% respectively). Interest in social development and culture (“culture”) is lower (7% overall) but what is consistent across our survey sites, is the strong (20%) interest among those living outside the Northwest. Courses and training programs in science, technology, and engineering (“science”) are of interest (8% overall) across all sites except “other”. Gitwinksihlkw showed great interest at 12.5% as did Laxgalts’ap at 12%. Each of the categories includes huge possibilities in offerings. These findings are at best a starting point for discussion. But the interest is there (834 ideas were





expressed by our 731 participants) and this serves as a healthy balance to the criticism/concern expressed about the degree to which education and training on the Nass are meeting current needs. This is a clear invitation to offer more.

## Types of training courses/programs participants would like to see in Nass Valley



An indication of the interest in entrepreneurial activity on the Nass is the fact that 565 (77%) of our pool of 731 respondents completed this component of the survey. In spite of the century's long history of active trading on the Nass and into the interior, it is unlikely that all of the 565 people answering this question are planning on opening a business soon. These findings represent a combination of genuine intent and more general opinion as to the types of small businesses

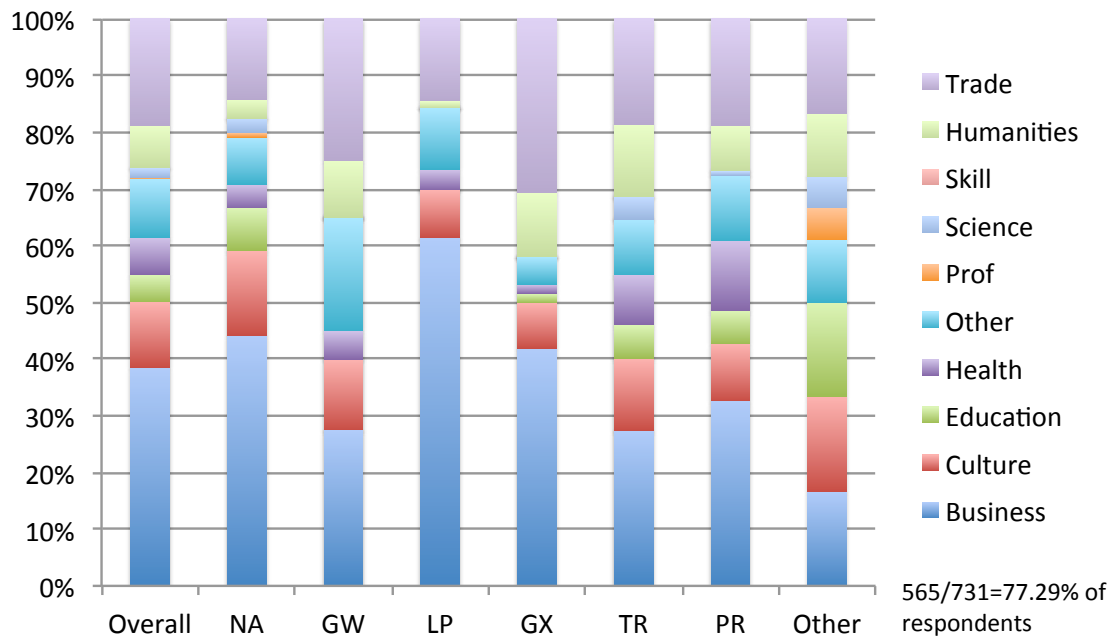


that would be desirable in the Valley and beyond. “Business” was the strongest interest at 38% overall. Our coding of responses to this open-ended question included business, tourism, and administration within this category. The composite nature of this item may explain the variability of interest across the survey sites. In Laxgalts’ap, almost 62% of people surveyed expressed interest. When we asked about the sorts of jobs people were working, Laxgalts’ap responded with a combination of business, administration, social services, and trades that totaled greater than any village on the Nass. Tourism trailed a sad fourth. Perhaps this 62% represents interest in exploiting tourism opportunities, perhaps it simple reflects a village that is already engaged in these activities and wants to do more.

The second strongest interest was in trades as a small business. This came in at 19% overall and peaked in Gingolx at 31%, with Gitwinksihlkw at 27%. These were already very prominent occupations in these two villages, likely a case of success inspiring imitation. “Culture” (which includes social development and culture) is an interest in New Aiyansh (15%), Gitwinksihlkw (12%), Terrace (13%), and especially beyond the Northwest (17%). Interest in “health” (health and first aid) at 7% overall, was really only expressed in Terrace (9%) and Prince Rupert (12%). The case that has been made elsewhere for the need for a spectrum of supports for population health and the relative lack of interest argues for dialogue on the emerging employment and business needs on the Nass. Nisga’a Lisims Government and WWNI are well positioned to continue this back and forth with the people and to set funding and facilitation services once clear priorities have emerged.



## Types of small businesses participants would start



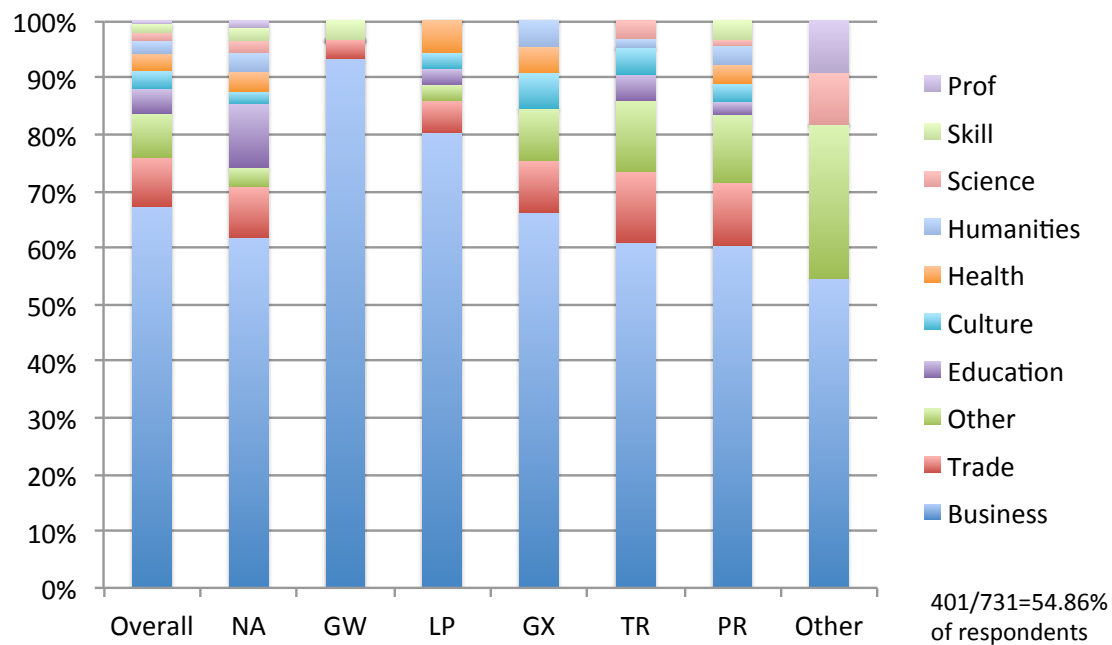
Participants overwhelmingly expressed a need for business training. Of the 731 people who completed our surveys, 410 people expressed opinions about the sorts of training that would support starting a small business. Of those ideas, 67% fell into the coding “business” (business proper and tourism and administration). So this strong interest will have to be examined in detail to determine the variety of courses and other supports that will meet people’s specific needs. It is possible that basic financial literacy, market research, and writing business plans will form a core. But it is probable that things like business mentoring, peer support, liability issues, advertising, and self-care will be desired. This interest peaks in Gitwinksihlkw (93%) followed by Laxgalts’ap (80%).



Trades training for self-employment is a modest second in participants' interest (9% overall, highest in Terrace at 12% and Prince Rupert at 11%). Interest in training in education as a business, at only 4% overall, has a spike of interest (11%) in New Aiyansh. Whether these people's intention is local for programs along the Nass is not clear. Interest in healthcare and first aid training is weak at 3% overall. Again, the interpretation of this finding is difficult. Are people expressing a genuine interest in getting training to set up a business or is this an expression of interest in first aid courses and training for entry to paid employment in healthcare? The demographics on the Nass propel immediate needs for care to help the small wave of Nisga'a elders "age in place". But the greater need is for health and wellness support for the large wave of children and youth. This graph stands best as a starting place for further research into the sorts of educational and training supports that would give the Nass a higher quality of life in all its aspects.



## The types of training required prior to starting a small business

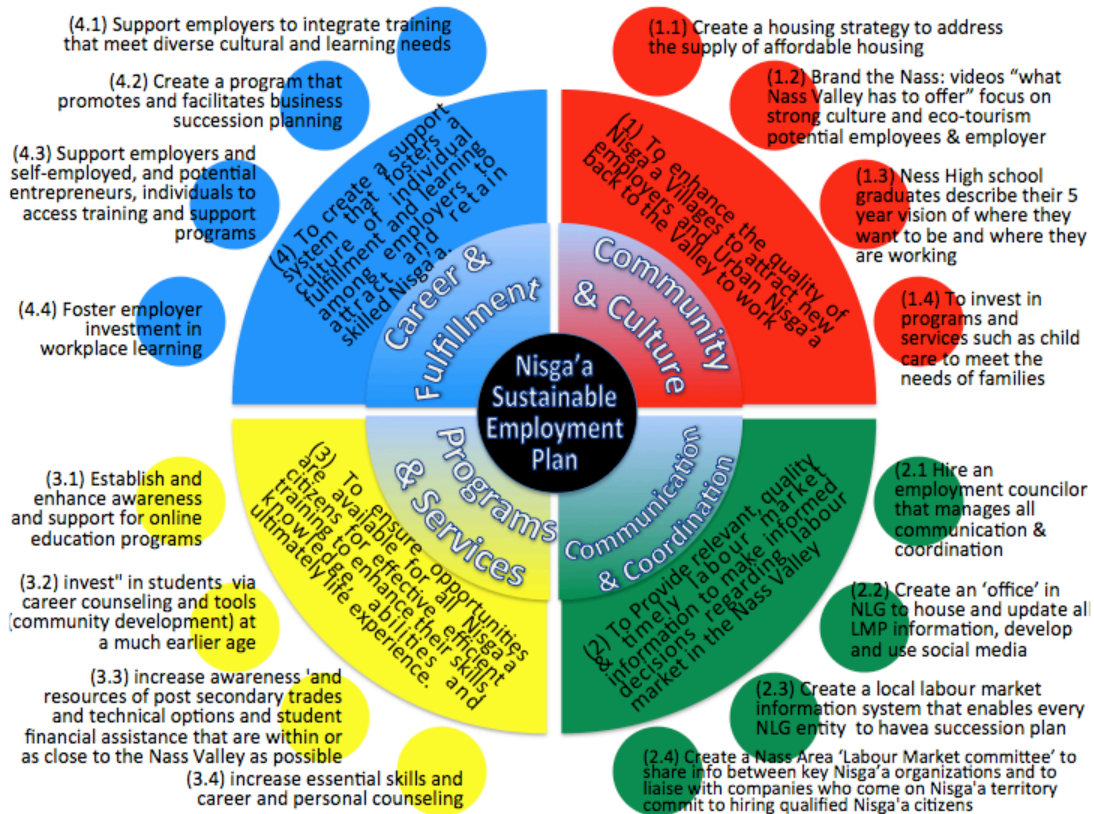


for internal



## ===== SECTION 3: Strategy and Action Plan =====

### SECTION 3: STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



### Four Key Strategies to Support a Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan

When the research findings are focused and reordered, four general strategies naturally emerge that support a Nisga'a sustainable employment plan. The first involves enhancing the quality of community and cultural life in the Nisga'a Villages ("Community & Culture"). This will not only strengthen the existing



workforce, but also support local economic initiatives, attract entrepreneurs and investment from beyond the Nass, and draw back the emigrant Nisga'a into the Valley. The second strategy focuses on "Communication & Coordination": providing relevant, quality and timely labour market information to make informed decisions regarding labour market in the Nass Valley. The breadth of labour market and employment change which is envisioned will require extensive "Programs & Services" to ensure opportunities are available for all Nisga'a citizens for effective, efficient training to enhance their skills, knowledge, abilities, and ultimately life experience. The Nass Valley fostered intense entrepreneurial activity from ancient times. This business spirit has suffered somewhat from the history of attempts at colonization. Our strategy grouping called "Career & Fulfillment" is intended to create a support system that fosters a culture of individual fulfillment and learning among employers to attract and retain skilled Nisga'a. Each of the following sections presents the relevant research findings in a brief synopsis that anchors that strategy, comments on how those findings frame, feed into and give shape to the strategy, and then recommendations for specific actions to bring the strategy to life.

## 1. Community & Culture

"To enhance the quality of Nisga'a Villages to attract new employers and Urban Nisga'a back to the Valley to work."

Any improvement in the economic circumstances on the Nass Valley will rest upon the labours of the people themselves. The happier and healthier the villages are, the more likely the Nisga'a workforce will be in a position to positively engage the challenges that will have to be resolved moving forward. The Nisga'a engage in this journey from a strong base. The Nisga'a Villages have thrived from ancient times in a richly sustainable environment, building a



culture that is intimately bound to the land, and is current and vigorous. The Nass Valley is a wonder of natural beauty replete with resources and inhabited by a strong, proud people who have not only maintained their culture and identity but have made history innovating their relationship with the Federal and Provincial governments and the Mother Parliament in London. Economic health will be enhanced through partnerships with people and organizations based outside the Valley that will be drawn to a resourceful, resilient, and entrepreneurial workforce. This study highlights many of the human resource assets of the Nass and suggests ways of strengthening this base. The Nass will thrive as the individual villages thrive.

#### Research Context for Anchoring Community and Culture Strategies

- The Nisga'a are a proud people. What are they are proud of? "Culture" stands top of list at 36%. It is particularly strong in Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap, and interestingly Prince Rupert at 40+%. "Identity" is particularly salient amongst those in Gingolx and those living outside the Northwest. "Tradition" ranges from about 5 to 15% as a spontaneously offered basis of pride. "Nisga'a language" is a source of pride in New Aiyansh and particularly in Gitwinksihlkw. Such as feast, cultural activities are important for all Nisga'a and respondents from New Aiyansh and Gingolx emphasized this. "Language" tops the list at 69% of respondents as an important feature of Nisga'a culture that they hoped would be passed on! Language tied with "tradition" in Gitwinksihlkw but topped the list in the rest of the Nass and in Terrace (at 32%, more evidence of Terrace's special relationship with the Nass), Prince Rupert, and beyond the Northwest (43%). Otherwise, tradition came second (or a close third outside the Northwest). "Culture" slipped into third or fourth place. About 26% of those responding in Gitwinksihlkw and Gingolx consider themselves fluent in Nisga'a. That number drops to





about 17% in New Aiyansh and Laxgalts'ap. Very impressive numbers understand the language "somewhat". The numbers who understand the language "not at all" are really quite low in the Valley (ranging from 7 to 14%). Given the way language instruction has been historically approached this should be considered a substantial success.

- What things are the Nisga'a least proud of (factors that often undermine our success)? (These amount to only 70% as many as the sources of pride.) Overall, five common factors were: less citizens volunteering: substance abuse (9.2% of total sample), government/taxes/funding (8.3%), losing status and the treaty (7.5%), lack of caring and negative attitudes (6%), employment and education (5.9%), and not knowing the language (5.9%). Substance abuse was of least concern to those in Gitwinksihlkw (2 of 23 comments) but of more concern in New Aiyansh, Laxgalts'ap, Gingolx, and especially Terrace. However, the Nisga'a leadership does consistently raise the issue of "boot-leggers" as an issue that needs addressing. Government, taxes, and funding issues were salient in New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, and especially beyond the Northwest. Treaty and status concerns were lowest in New Aiyansh, higher in Laxgalts'ap, Gingolx, and both Prince Rupert and beyond the Northwest.
- A substantial portion of our sample (57%) spent at least some of their formative years in elementary school in the Nass Valley (44% were only on the Nass and 13% were on the Nass for some of that period), but fully 43% have not spent their early years on the Nass or if they did, it was as visitors. Terrace hosted 6% of our participants in elementary school while 29% attended in Prince Rupert/Port Edward. By secondary school we see the evidence of migration out of the Nass. Only 34% of respondents went to high school on the Nass. Terrace presents a special case where many (42%) went to high school on the Nass. As high school means a journey out of

three of the four villages, it also creates a choice point as to whether that journey ends up in New Aiyansh or another relatively friendly place like Terrace or Port Edward. Sizeable numbers in New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw went to high school in Terrace. Prince Rupert has a small number of people who went to high school on the Nass, but substantial numbers of people living in Terrace and along the Nass (excepting New Aiyansh) got their high school in Prince Rupert or Port Edward. Prince Rupert/Port Edward was home for 28% of our high schoolers (the same proportion as for elementary education). Of all the villages, New Aiyansh holds the highest proportion (54%) of its high schoolers in residence as adults, higher than the proportion of those who went to elementary school. By the time families have teen age kids they appear more likely to settle into an area.

- Reported incomes on the Nass are somewhat higher than in other First Nations for individuals and substantially higher for households. However Nisga'a who have left the Valley don't appear to be doing as well on average. This may reflect higher average wages for existing jobs on the Nass, but a relatively limited supply of such jobs.
- There is a dramatic trend in income down the Nass Valley: mean personal income in New Aiyansh is \$19,000 more than the mean personal income reported in the poorest of our villages, Gingolx. While just over 36% of people in New Aiyansh report personal incomes under \$20,000 this number climbs to 67% in Gingolx. The difference between personal income in the Valley and that in Terrace and Prince Rupert (which are comparable) is largely due to higher income levels in new Aiyansh. A substantial boost is added to the mean personal income in New Aiyansh by the relatively larger portion (10%) of people earning \$60,000 - \$80,000.

- The level of unemployment increases progressively as we move down the Nass: from New-Aiyansh (27.7% unemployed) to Gingolx (with a high of 53.4% unemployment). This is paralleled in reverse by the rates of self employment: highest in New Aiyansh at a modest 8.1% when compared with the average for BC as a whole (about 19%), but progressively lower, bottoming out at 2.7% in Gingolx.
- Current employment never approaches levels expected in a healthy economy (including both employed and self employed, at 67.8% for those 40-49 and 68% for those 50-59). And unemployment is unacceptably high amongst the young: 60% of those under 20 and 49.1% of those 20-29 are unemployed.
- Another way of looking at employment is to ask what portion of the past five years have you been employed. In New Aiyansh 39% of the sample worked for the whole five years and 16% were employed less than one year. Gitwinksihlkw leads the survey sites with 50% of people holding employment for the full five years, with a profile similar to that in Prince Rupert. Gingolx is at the bottom of this curve with the lowest portion (32%) employed for the full five years and 29% working less than one year.
- A 59% majority of the Nisga'a people rated their health at a 4 "good" or 5 "excellent", and 32% have rated their health at a moderate 3. The number of participants who rated their health as low (1 or 2) increases moving down the valley, cresting at almost 11% in Gingolx.
- Participants' dissatisfaction with local health services' ability to meet their current needs increases moving down the Nass Valley; participants indicating healthcare services meet present needs "not at all" or "a little bit" begins at a 23% low in New Aiyansh and rises to a 44% high in Gingolx (higher still in Terrace at 48%). Looking forward, this failure of confidence in local healthcare is far more profound: Gitwinksihlkw reports the lowest total of "not at all" or "a little bit" at 43%, followed by New Aiyansh at 46%, and



peaking in Gingolx (close to 68%!). This is an area that requires more exploration with the involvement of Nisga'a Valley Health Authority.

- Overall “increase in medical and dental care” (20%), “medical coverage” (19%), and “patient experience” (13.5%) ranked as the top 3 attributes of healthcare in the Nass Valley, with relatively consistent proportions, across the Nass villages, Terrace and Prince Rupert. An encouraging message is given with these results because with their top answer, respondents indicate they recognize an improvement in the overall medical care they have received since the Nisga'a Final Agreement. However, this is not echoed in their estimation of local healthcare's ability to meet future needs. This may indicate an insufficient level of communication between the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority (NVHA), and the Nisga'a people regarding further changes or plans for improvement. In addition, overall an “increase in health professionals” (6%), and “cultural understanding” (3%) consistently trail as attributes, and this perception is congruent with the changes to Nass healthcare desired by participants. It is noted that Nisga'a Citizens have voiced the need for assisted living care facility to be built in the Nass Valley. NVHA has started planning and is securing the funding to make this a reality.
- Of all participants 21.3% rated their current accommodation as “more than adequate”, 57% “adequate”, and 19% “inadequate”. “Lack of housing” is the strongest determinant behind why more than one family unit is living in a household. This rises slightly moving down the valley to flux between 50 and 60%. “To provide family support” and “because of money” trail as second and third factors in the Nass Valley villages. Amongst Urban Local participants, a “lack of housing” is still a factor (especially in Terrace), but “money” issues and the need “to provide family support” become dominant factors. Also, specifically in Prince Rupert the desire to live together becomes more

prevalent, rising to 18%. Additionally, a “lack of housing” registers at not even 10% in Prince Rupert, in stark contrast to other regions.

### Framework for Community and Culture Strategies

The foregoing findings provide a detailed framework for our first strategy - to enhance the quality of community and cultural life in the Nisga'a Villages. We need to consider six facets or foundations of village life in this “Community & Culture” project: the health of traditional culture and language, amelioration of social problems, the impact of schooling on residence, the social impacts of income and employment, the status of and supports for physical health of the people, and adequate housing. Traditional culture is alive and well on the Nass. This intimate core needs to be both supported and recognized, incorporated into any plan for sustainable employment. Care must be taken not to cheaply “exploit” culture and language, but at the same time culture and language strongly support and reflect the life of individuals and collectives on the Nass. Anything that enhances these will enhance the workforce and the appeal of the Nass to both outsiders and those who have moved away. Attention should also be made to ensure the most effective approaches to training and maintenance in the Nisga'a language are employed, something that is highly valued by our participants. And as “culture” intimately resonates with and reflects the Nass Valley, enhancing culture and language will enhance the appeal and attraction of the Valley to both tourists and entrepreneurs.

While social problems and the things participants were least proud of (substance abuse, government/taxes/funding, status and treaty issues, lack of caring and negative attitudes, employment/education, and language) were relatively subdued in the concerns of our participants, many will be addressed directly or



indirectly by the role out of this project.

A finding that needs to be kept in focus is the impact of where people receive their elementary and especially their secondary school education. This must have an important impact as place is such an important component of personal identity, particularly in the early years. And as the land is a huge contributor to Nisga'a identity and culture this proportion of the people forming their identities outside the Nass must have an impact. Drawing people back to the Nass and enhancing the quality of education given to their children will increase the likelihood that both the parents and the children remain on the Nass. Because those in Terrace appear to have a special, more reciprocal relationship with the Nass Valley, they need to systematically receive communications regarding efforts and successes at improving education (and all other aspects of Nisga'a life on the Nass Valley). Those Nisga'a living in Prince Rupert/Port Edward and beyond the Northwest are likely going to be harder to draw back into major engagement in economic development and educational opportunities on the Nass.

While the relatively stronger average income on the Nass is an attractive asset and a solid base upon which to build, it is overshadowed by the unacceptably high general levels of unemployment, the relatively low levels of income, the dark shadow of high unemployment amongst youth, and the inequalities of employment and income encountered as we move down the Nass Valley. Bolstering general, and particularly youth employment, can go a long way to enhancing self esteem, building skills and positive attitudes, creating a sense of participation and ownership of the economy, and ploughing money back into the local economy. Keeping the principles of balance and fairness front and centre in rolling out this employment plan will increase buy-in along the Nass and will focus efforts where they are most effective. While patience is a particularly strong



Nisga'a virtue, the years since the promulgation of the Nisga'a Treaty have both improved circumstances on the Nass and increased the appetite for change, thereby challenging that patience. The repercussions of visible efforts to bring more equality to the Nass Valley by improving the circumstances of those villages and individuals most in need cannot be over-estimated. While the fruit of economic development will fall here, the specific initiatives will take place under the other three strategies.

The physical and mental health of a people is at least as important as its cultural and socioeconomic health. While the surveys, at face value, present the impression of a generally healthy population, we suggest that the picture may not be this robust. As is the case with many aspects of the surveys, we are dealing with subjective opinion. People's impressions of what constitutes good health could be based on criteria that does not bear scrutiny: for example, someone has thus far been rarely sick, so they judge themselves as at least moderately healthy despite having an unhealthy Body Mass Index (BMI), low levels of exercise, or perhaps an unhealthy diet. And even if the population is "moderately healthy" there is lots of room for progress to be made. Demographic trends are not often apparent to those swept up in them. The "grey wave" is hitting the Nass as it will the rest of BC. But the education, and health and wellness implications of the larger tide of children and youth are already a much bigger challenge. The health of the villages hinges upon the health of the young, and this needs to be a large piece of any sustainable employment plan. The deterioration in reported health, and the decrease in confidence in the capacity of the existing system to meet future needs that becomes more prevalent moving down the Valley warrants further monitoring, investigation, and resources as it might be linked to problems in the delivery of healthcare or health education on multiple fronts (diet, exercise, physiotherapy, facilities, health professionals, etc.). These health concerns will of



course have implications in the other strategy domains.

This is an opportunity for the NVHA to trumpet some of its success. Nisga'a citizens need to know about things that are going well with healthcare along the Nass. Accurate information about health and healthcare will also likely make the idea of working in healthcare more appealing to youth when contemplating their careers.

Housing is the crucible within which culture and community are formed. Before serious invitations can be made bringing people back to the Nass, current housing needs have to be addressed. As noted in the findings, on average only 19% rated their current housing as "inadequate". This number swells to about 30% in New Aiyansh and Gingolx. Additionally these sorts of judgements are done in context. Multiple families or large extended families have always shared accommodations on the Nass. The concerns expressed become more grave when we recognize that mould, a highly toxic substance, is identified as the target for remediation by 18% of those with inadequate housing in Gingolx and 9% overall. The need for more space is identified in 25% of all participants in inadequate housing. So improving housing stock is a priority. As will be noted later, renovating existing housing is seen as the major solution.

#### **Specifics for Implementation of Community & Culture Strategies**

### **1.1 Create a housing strategy to address the supply of affordable housing**

The crisis in housing on First Nations reserves is widely recognized and has engendered a fierce competition for funds. Innovative approaches could make appeals for funding more attractive. As will be noted, tying in home renovations with trades training and local employment initiatives could increase the





appeal of grant applications. The data generated in this study can bolster the case made. The inclusion of fee simple title within the Nisga'a Final Agreement needs to be explored as an avenue for leveraging funds by individuals or collectives to allow for entrepreneurial activity and improvement of housing stock. The current economic climate means that this will be a delicate and long term component of this strategy. Any initiative must involve local level governments and the occupants of existing shelter stock. A sense of pride of ownership is a very powerful motivator which needs to be cultivated.

### **1.2 Brand the Nass: videos “what the Nass Valley has to offer”, focus on strong culture and eco-tourism, target potential employees and employers**

The National Film Board used to have a program entitled “Challenge for Change” which was called upon by a group of concerned and highly motivated citizens to help them frame and then illustrate a problem, chart a set of solutions, and then make a film to be used in approaching agencies which could help. The process of putting together a short and highly partisan film requires that the issues be understood and enunciated clearly, the solutions defined precisely and realistically, and then the case presented compellingly. (Gingolx advocated for sewage treatment as a participant in this program in the early 70's.) The same approach might be used in this context. The more this project bears the imprint of the Villages the more likely it is to register with target audiences and to be relevant to local needs. These videos might highlight success stories like the Crab Fest in Gingolx. They should be made by people on the Nass, with appropriate technical and artistic support, and engage the youth (using rap and music video style) in at least some cases. They should also provide opportunities to capture and document traditional culture giving a prominent voice



to the Elders.

### **1.3 Ness High School graduates describe their 5 year vision of where they are working**

While a simple and easily executed component of this strategy, this could have strong impact. An expectation of students in their final year would be a research project in which they explore the options available to them now on the Nass, or innovate an activity they could see themselves doing in five years. In BC the average age of people starting small businesses is dropping dramatically. This is in part due to youth staring at diminishing opportunity of the historic sort, i.e. stepping into an established job and staying there for your career, and getting used to the notion of making it happen themselves. Nisga'a youth are no different. A small army of high school students, who are more interested in the "why's and how's" than the "why not's", can have a very refreshing and salutary impact on a business community. And they will come up with solutions that elude those with more solidified notions of what is possible.

### **1.4 Invest in programs and services such as child care to meet the needs of families**

Both the grey wave and the Aboriginal baby boom tax the resources of caregivers. Young caregivers need dedicated support if they are to work, improve their skill levels through education and apprenticeship, and engage in the hugely absorbing demands of starting up small business. On the Nass, a disproportionate share of the childcare "burden" is carried by the grandparents, who may be contending with health and financial challenges of their own - they too need support. Enhancing programs that support effective parenting and providing good childcare options are ways of investing in families, which are the



economy's foundation.

## 1.5 Continue the push for improving education on the Nass

There needs to be an intense focus on providing innovative solutions to local educational challenges. We just noted the importance of addressing physical and mental health issues. While it is widely recognized that health status is a major reflection of the operation of a variety of the social determinants of health (income, education, marital status, etc.) health-related decisions (what I put in my mouth, whether I go for that walk, etc.) are intimately personal choices. Effective education introduces the possibility of modifying those personal changes. While we are not suggesting that NLG abrogate its responsibility for improving the social determinants of health, people can only make informed personal choices if they are informed. So health education should be improved and made broadly available. This initiative will have to involve the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority, the Nisga'a School District 92, NLG, elders in the Villages, and youth representatives because messaging has to be relevant to the young who are going to be important recipients of health-related information. This will include information that will help people make better, and more "accurate" decisions around their health status and lifestyle choices both for themselves and for those they are responsible for. But "education" is meaningless if it is confined to "information" and does not include opportunities for behaviour change. All the schools and outlets that can be reached by NLG should offer **only** healthy choices. And there should be lots of attractive opportunities for physical activity, things like dance and hiking which might engage young and old Nisga'a. The bleak prognosis participants have for healthcare services meeting their future needs also suggests that people believe their level of health will significantly decrease. Improving the information people have about their actual health



status, and giving them realistic and effective steps they can take to improve their health may help their sense of control and agency.

An area that is central to this strategy is “culture”. This term, as we have seen, is extremely broad and lives differently in each person and group. Education that does not instill of one’s culture is only “training”. The Nisga’a have a rich recent (35 year) history of including culture in the formal education of children, and many young and middle aged adults were reintroduced to their culture by having to teach it to children in the schools. It is the responsibility of the School Board to ensure that instruction in Nisga’a is being done in the most effective ways.

## **2. Communication & Coordination**

“To provide relevant, quality, and timely labour market information to make informed decisions regarding labour market in the Nass Valley.”

The best laid plans will fail in the absence of effective and appropriately regularized communication and coordination. This is certainly the case with rapidly changing labour market information. Out of date information in this field will produce bad, very costly decisions, will frustrate job seekers, will drive employers towards less effective ways of recruiting (the “grapevine”, agencies outside the Valley which will not target Nisga’a peoples), and will result in the withdrawal of cooperation, which is essential for success. The search for either work or workers is not neutral and impassive: both parties have their livelihood on the line. If information is not current, accurate, and complete people will not use it, stripping NLG of its capacity to effectively influence development along the Nass.



## Research Context for Anchoring Communication & Coordination Strategies

- There is an alarmingly high rate of overall unemployment on the Nass (38.8% as compared with a BC Aboriginal on-reserve rate of 28.1%, an Aboriginal off-reserve rate of 21.3%, and an unemployment rate of 10.2% for the North Coast/Nechako region as a whole). The average rate of unemployment in the Valley is almost four times the rate in the surrounding territory.
- Between 37% (New Aiyansh and Gingolx) and 49% (Laxgalts'ap) of the population on the Nass is either planning to move or unsure about their plans. As you move down the Nass the likelihood of moving to another site within the Valley decreases from a high of about 14% in New Aiyansh to a low of 0% in Gingolx. However 40% of those who plan to move from Terrace are setting their sights on the Valley.
- In addition, these findings are importantly linked on a few levels with results detailed in the employment section: First, housing needs are congruent with the types of jobs participants would like to see in the Nass Valley, where 22% overall would like to see more trades. And second, a potentially insufficient number of Nisga'a people who would be willing to supply an increased demand for trade workers, since only 22.6% of people already trained in the trades would take work in the field if it existed and only 16% of our whole sample would retrain to enter trades.
- Trades are an occupation that has both substantial numbers (lowest in New Aiyansh at 7.9 and highest in Gingolx at 25%) and widespread appetite for apprenticeship training. The dramatic difference in participation in Terrace (3.9%) as compared with Prince Rupert (27.4%) merits close examination.
- While profitable self employment often depends upon having access to a substantial local population of customers and clients, this opportunity needs to be explored and supported. Elders may be looked to for leadership in self



employment: about 1/8 of those 60 - 69 who are employed are in self employment and that proportion grows to over 1/5 of the over 70 employed (these people are largely responsible for pulling the rate of self employment on the Nass to 8.1%). We need to actively explore forms of self employment which are not population dependent (e.g. small scale resource extraction, arts and crafts for sale outside the Valley, internet marketing, raising produce and meats, tourism, etc.).

#### Framework for Communication & Coordination Strategies

The agents (employment counsellor, NLG “office”, and “Labour Market Committees”) described below under the specific communication and coordination components must engage the challenges before them in a highly proactive, entrepreneurial spirit. They will actively work with employers to anticipate openings. They will cultivate relationships with businesses so the counsellor or committee is the first resource thought of when there is a labour need, whether for a new employee or for upgrading of an existing employee. They are work enablers. Their role might mean suggesting job sharing, identifying and supporting a job mentor, keeping an updated list of housing stock that may be called on for temporary or permanent accommodation of a worker who has to move to a job opening, facilitating resume writing and career planning for applicants, helping an employer learn how to do effective advertising, applicant screening, on-the-job training, etc. Of course their central role is registering work and workers, bringing the two together. They will have to manage the competing demands well enough that this central function is not compromised. Part of the central function will include making sure that appropriate things are accessible over the internet to the appropriate parties. This will require a good working knowledge of freedom of information, and



protection of privacy principles and legislation (FOIPOP). And of course, this implies that all job postings will be on the net.

The need for improvements in housing has been identified. While “increased housing availability” was desired by 8%, people generally indicated they would prefer improving their current residence versus moving or building new homes: of all participants who reported their current housing as “inadequate” 37% specified renovations would improve the situation. Moreover, “increased space” was the 2nd highest overall response at 24.3%: this need could also be met through renovations. Conversely, findings for change desired by all surveyed participants, regardless of their current housing situation, were quite different and indicated a trend toward new housing. For example, participants’ overall; top three change preferences included increased housing “availability” (21%), “type” (19.5%) and “affordability” (19.5%), and renovation “need” and “quality” only registered at a modest 5.9% and 4.2% respectively. These results may indicate that participants with inadequate housing situations have a different view on the issue, and/or that housing availability, type, and affordability are considered increasingly problematic issues for the future. This complex puzzle will require the coordination of a significant number of parties and resources: AANDC, NLG, perhaps BCIT, certainly all of the parties detailed just below. Renovation depends upon a skilled workforce that can effectively assess the condition of housing stock, produce plans and secure permitting, make cost-critical decisions about how to proceed, and execute the renovation. There has to be ongoing monitoring of work progress with a preparedness to change course at any point. This work will need to heavily depend upon the immediate availability of materials and sub-trades, all resources which are presently in short supply. The alternative to renovation is new building and this will require the same infrastructure. All



of the negotiations to enable a program of renovation and building, to source and support a workforce, to ensure appropriate support infrastructure, will critically involve all the agents we describe below. Renovation and building will be only a small part of the sorts of work activities that will have to be fostered and monitored by the collection of people described below.

The counsellors and labour market committees are not to see themselves as servants of the employers. Indeed, they have a strong triple allegiance: to NLG and the best interests of the Nisga'a people, to the employers, and to the workers. It was noted that the top reason given for leaving a job everywhere except Gingolx was the poor quality of management and supervision. "More jobs" is only part of the drive to improve the employment situation on the Nass. If these people do their job they will get information about recurring problems with employer/managers. These will include complaints similar to the one just made (management/supervision) but will also include reports of unsafe workplace conditions, unreasonable performance pressures, failure to fully implement the Employment Standards Act, harassment of any kind, unfair termination, and so forth. Working with employers and employees or candidates may at times require tact and firmness, and will often ask for patience, creativity, and imagination.

A heavy involvement of volunteers is seen as part of this whole strategy. We have in mind village representatives on the committees, job mentors, workplace literacy tutors, participants in the production of "best practice" and "brand the Nass" videos and web pieces, and so forth. Of course, volunteers are not





paid which will be important in the early days of this initiative. But far more important, volunteers bring passion and vision and, like the canary in the coal mine, wither away when a project loses relevance or focus. A healthy core of volunteers should be looked upon as an important indicator of the health and relevance of the whole project.

These agents, both paid and volunteer, can have a very positive impact on the Nass. They should be able to help reduce the overall high unemployment (almost four times what it is in the surrounding Non-Aboriginal region. If there is more desirable, well paid work in the Valley the levels of mobility should fall off. This will be good for everybody. But we have noted alarming trends down the Nass Valley to Gingolx in decreasing rates of self employment, lowered personal and family income, increasing levels of unemployment, and ultimately the decision to leave the Nass (nobody who was unsure about moving or actually planned to leave Gingolx was going to move within the Valley). At least some of those living in Gingolx have come to the conclusion that the Valley does not meet their needs. Agents who are actively working to improve employment success and showing at least modest gains could have a dramatic impact on these inequalities, and a more profound impact on the spirit of hope on the Nass, which is the most important component of any employment plan.

#### **Specifics for Implementation of Communication & Coordination Strategies**

### **2.1 Hire an employment counsellor who manages all communication and coordination**

This will be a linchpin position requiring a multitalented and highly motivated individual. This person will take the lead in labour supply and workplace



issues on the Nass. We have already set out the sorts of activities he or she will have to undertake: managing the employment website, facilitating workforce readiness, supporting employers and workers for successful placements, participating in negotiations for grants and educational/vocational program innovation, liaising with or directing the NLG Labour Market Office, working with every NLG entity to create and use workforce and resource planning, facilitating the Nass Area “Labour Market Committee”, and ensuring that matters of equity between the Villages along the Nass be of highest priority.

## **2.2 Create an “office” in NLG to house and update all labour market information, develop and use social media**

This “Labour Market Office” could be multi-local, having a small presence in each of the Villages, for example a desk within each Village Government Office with part-time paid support, but a larger virtual presence expressed through the website noted above. That would mean the website would not be just a registry of available jobs, but a hub for generating interest and participation in all aspects of employment and economic development in the Valley and beyond. News of negotiations and breakthroughs, gossip about possibilities, in-depth stories of successes or challenges we can learn from, regular profiles of people who are making a difference in their own lives and the lives of their village, all these could be part of the website offerings. Incorporating social media, including Twitter, could allow people to actively join in the innovation and support each other. This would represent the “office” to the community and also bring the community into its daily operations. We noted a project for graduating students where they would research and present their five year work vision: this “office” would be an important contact point.



An important function of this office will be the documentation of the roll-out of this whole sustainable employment plan. That documentation will be crucial evidence that can be used to expand the involvement of businesses and others in the plan (for example in component 4.3).

### **2.3 Create a local labour market information system that enables every NLG entity to have a succession plan**

This is a natural and doable role out of the labour market vision. Because funding is tied to NLG the expectation can be effectively made and then these individual efforts can serve as models for the broader community. With the substantial history of inept or ineffective management that has plagued global and local economies, we all need to learn that planning that is creative and responsive can make concrete difference. These would each constitute little experiments in hope, optimism and good sense, and are most likely to be successful, thereby providing good models.

### **2.4 Create a Nass Area “Labour Market Committee” to share information between key Nisga’a organizations and to liaise with companies who come on Nisga’a territory to ensure hiring of qualified Nisga’a citizens**

Constituted of representatives from all the Villages and perhaps Terrace, entrepreneurs along the Nass, representatives of NLG, and the employment counsellor (2.1) this committee be the official face of the labour market on the Nass. It will receive the distillation of information on the job and labour market from the counsellor and “NLG Labour Market Office”, and will share with and get input from key Nisga’a organizations. Additionally, it will need to be empowered to negotiate, as well as liaise with businesses which are attracted to the Nass to ensure that meaningful efforts are made to hire qualified Nisga’a and that



there be a component of training which helps develop the local labour market. This would be the agency that stood behind the “brand the Nass” videos that were described in our first section.

### 3 Programs & Services

“To ensure opportunities are available for all Nisga’a citizens for effective, efficient training to enhance their skills, knowledge, abilities, and ultimately life experience.”

In many ways this strategy forms the essential piece. What is presented here is a set of suggested approaches designed to provide the essential skills necessary for individuals and businesses to move forward and take best advantage of the opportunities that abound on the Nass. Realistically, we need to invent these options because of the relatively small local population

#### Research Context for Anchoring Program and Services Strategies

- One size will not fit all on the Nass: the proportion of the local workforce engaged in any particular field is highly variable along the Nass. Efforts to improve workforce readiness will have to be tuned to each village according to the employment available. Initiatives supporting local food production would connect with a strong current flowing in the rest of the province. Arts and entertainment are significant employers only in Gingolx (14.3%), forming only 2.6% of jobs overall. Resource extraction (fisheries, forestry, mining) occupies 27.8% of workers in the Gitwinksihlkw sample: over ten times the level in any location except Prince Rupert (5.7%) or the respondents in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere (“other”) (11%). Tourism, hospitality, and retail numbers are low throughout the Nass Valley. Tourism is a natural area



to look to for growth in the Valley. Promoting local village and valley economic development will require a combination of collaboration and innovation at the village level and the development of Valley-wide initiatives and supports.

- Respondents were asked “Have you attended WWNI (Wilp Wilxo’oskwhl Nisga’a Institute)?” About 22% overall answered “yes”. Along the Nass we see an impressive 43% in New Aiyansh and an even greater 45% in Gitwinksihlkw have attended courses at WWNI. This falls off to 29% in Laxgalts’ap and lower still (14%) in Gingolx. The Terrace sample WWNI attendance climbs to 19% which is yet more evidence of their relative integration into Nass institutions. Almost one quarter of our participants have taken courses with WWNI. “Humanities” tops the list at 25% of all courses taken but varies widely across our sample sites peaking at 67% in Prince Rupert, 40% in Terrace, 30% in Gingolx, and 29% in Laxgalts’ap. “Culture” is second overall (21%) with higher participation in Laxgalts’ap (29%) and New Aiyansh (25%). Attendance in business programs is strong overall (16%) but highly variable amongst our survey sites
- To what extent are all educational services on the Nass meeting your current needs? Overall, we see disappointment in offerings on the Nass: 62% are satisfied either “not at all” or “a little bit”. This number is inflated a bit by the strong dissatisfaction in Terrace (76% “not at all” or “a little bit”), but it is not terribly discrepant from the ratings in the other three Nass villages (54% in New Aiyansh, 60% in Gitwinksihlkw, 57% in Laxgalts’ap, and 56% in Gingolx.) As any educator will immediately tell you, let’s look at the bright side. The cumulative positive ratings (“satisfactory” to “exceeds what I need”) are a solid base to improve from: 30% overall (largely drawn down by ratings of 19% in each of Terrace and Prince Rupert and 24% beyond the

Northwest), 44% in New Aiyansh, 41% in Gitwinksihlkw, 41% in Laxgalts'ap, and 39% in Gingolx

- 77 – 88% of respondents say that it is “very important” that work they do in courses and programs be portable, recognized beyond the institutions in which they earn them.
- Respondents are clear and consistent across survey sites on the top three sets of courses and training they want to see offered in the Nass Valley: trades, business, and health (at 27%, 18%, and 14% respectively). Interest in social development and culture (“culture”) is lower (7% overall) but consistent across our survey sites, excepting strong (20%) interest amongst those living outside the Northwest. Courses and training programs in science, technology, and engineering (“science”) are of interest (8% overall) across all sites except “other”. Gitwinksihlkw showed great interest at 12.5% as did Laxgalts'ap at 12%. Each of the categories includes huge possibilities in offerings. These findings are at best a starting point for discussion. But the interest is there (834 ideas were expressed by our 731 participants) and this serves as a healthy balance to the criticism/concern expressed about the degree to which education and training on the Nass are meeting current needs. This is a clear invitation to offer more.
- And what about training for existing jobs? Again, the average (37%) indicates a workforce that is ready to adapt to employment opportunities including retraining. This interest is strongest in Laxgalts'ap (an impressive 64%) and lowest in Gitwinksihlkw (at 22%). This is more evidence of a motivated workforce. The question for study stakeholders is how that retraining be best delivered.
- When asked where they would like to do their education/retraining only a minority of those living on the Nass would prefer training where they live (a high of 34% in Gingolx and a low of 22% in Gitwinksihlkw). However the



majority of those living in Terrace or Prince Rupert would choose to stay home for their retraining. It seems that retraining is seen by many on the Nass as an opportunity to leave the Valley, almost equally to go to Terrace/Prince Rupert or to leave the Northwest. There appears to be a very modest interest in internet-based training whatever their home base. This flies in the face of the current movement towards distributive learning whether through internet or paper-based courses. A substantial portion of the sample is open to training wherever and however it is offered.

- Gitwinksihlkw is eager for a huge increase in tourism (6% of current jobs, 27% of jobs they would like to see!) As they are currently the strongest on the Nass for resource extraction, that category drops in their wish list. Gingolx wants more trades and is doing fine for arts and entertainment. In Laxgalts'ap they strongly want increases in tourism (goes from 6% to 27%), business is fine (currently 27% and goes to 6%), infrastructure (social services, government, and recreation) is sufficient (drops from 37% to 20%), and they need an increase in the presence of trades (13% goes to 20%). New Aiyansh is on the tourism bandwagon (presently employs 4.5% and it tops the list of desired jobs at 27.5%), needs more trades people (8% to 17%), is replete with infrastructure jobs (33% goes to 17%) and with business jobs (28% to 12%). Health related jobs are seen as requiring the same increases as noted in the other villages (about a doubling of interest). The job choices in Terrace show sufficient business (25% to 10%), and tourism positions available (27% to 18% which latter percent still indicates strong interest). Interest in trades is strong (4% goes to 19%). In Prince Rupert only participants show strong interest in an increase in infrastructure jobs (8% to 20%).
- The overwhelming majority of respondents want to upgrade their skills within

the next five years. This proportion drops by approximately 8 –16% outside the Nass, but 64% or more are still eager to upgrade.

- There is enthusiastic support for innovation of jobs on the Nass. The types of jobs participants would like to see in the Nass Valley, overall were the ones you might expect from a community economic development consultant: include tourism (25%), trades (22%), social services/government/recreation (17%), resource extraction (11%), health (8%), and business (7.7%). Tourism, trade, social services/government/recreation, and resource extraction feature as top choice occupations in all the villages and Terrace and Prince Rupert as well. When asked a more personal question as to which job they would like to work in if it were available in their area the top choices over all are, in order of preference, trades (22.6%), tourism (19.5%), business (16.1%), social services/government/recreation (16.1%), and education (8.4%). The major difference here is the drop in “health” and the rise in “education” which may reflect a perception that working in the healthcare professions is less appealing. The other finding that stands out is the change in valuation of “trades” in Gitwinksihlkw. Almost 27% recognized trades as a type of job they perceived a need for in the Valley, but nobody who was already qualified indicated it as something they were personally interested in. This may be because people in trades are already working in Gitwinksihlkw.
- “Business” was the strongest interest at 38% overall. Our coding of responses to this open-ended question included business, tourism, and administration within this category. The composite nature of this item may explain the variability of interest across the survey sites. In Laxgalts’ap almost 62% of people surveyed expressed interest. When we asked about the sorts of jobs people were working, Laxgalts’ap responded with a combination of business, administration, social services, and trades that





totalled greater than any village on the Nass. Tourism trailed a sad fourth. Perhaps this 62% represents interest in exploiting tourism opportunities, perhaps it simply reflects a village that is already engaged in these activities and wants to do more. Participants overwhelmingly expressed a need for business training: 67% fell into the coding “business” (business proper and tourism and administration). This interest peaks in Gitwinksihlkw (93%) followed by Laxgalts’ap (80%). Trades training for self employment is a modest second in participant’s interest (9% overall, highest in Terrace at 12% and Prince Rupert at 11%). Interest in training in education as a business, at only 4% overall, has a spike of interest (11%) in New Aiyansh. Whether these people’s intention is local for programs along the Nass is not clear. Interest in healthcare and first aid training is weak at 3% overall.

- One very interesting finding is that arts and entertainment **drop** in emphasis from a very low base of 2.6% to only 1.5%. This opens the conversation that is made effectively by arts groups all over the nation revealing that the arts and entertainment industry is actually one of the most efficient generators of local wealth. Although precision is difficult, ACTRA estimates that the arts and entertainment industry contributes \$85 billion (7.4%) to the economy of Canada. Increasing tourism without increasing the position of those who can best present the evolving face of Nisga’a culture does not make sense.
- The second strongest interest was in trades as a small business. This came in at 19% overall and peaked in Gingolx at 31%, with Gitwinksihlkw at 27%. These were already very prominent occupations in these two villages, likely a case of success inspiring imitation. “Culture” (which includes social development and culture) is an interest in New Aiyansh (15%), Gitwinksihlkw (12%), Terrace (13%), and especially beyond the Northwest (17%). Interest in “health” (health and first aid) at 7% overall, was really only expressed in Terrace (9%) and Prince Rupert (12%). The case that has been made

elsewhere for the need for a spectrum of supports for population health and the relative lack of interest argues for dialogue on the emerging employment and business needs on the Nass. Nisga'a Lisims Government and WWNI are well positioned to continue this back and forth with the people, and to set funding and facilitation of services once clear priorities have emerged.

- We see a trend down the valley: those saying healthcare services meet present needs “not at all” or “a little bit” ranges from a low of 23% in New Aiyansh to a high of 44% in Gingolx (higher still in Terrace at 48%). And looking forward, this failure of confidence in local healthcare is far more profound: Gitwinksihlkw reports the lowest total of “not at all” or “a little bit” at 43%, followed by New Aiyansh at 46%, and peaking in Gingolx (close to 68%!).

#### Framework for Program and Services Strategies

There is an eager interest on the Nass for training and support for a variety of occupations: tourism, trade, social services/government/recreation, and resource extraction top the list. While not salient in the results, it is our opinion that food production could be a highly viable alternative partly because of its historic position in the local economy, and partly because of the very high prices of commodities brought in from outside, and the popular and widespread support for ecologically sustainable food production.

When asked where they want to train or upgrade, the minority want to do it where they live: “training” means “opportunity” and “opportunity” lies “elsewhere”. Many already have put this mantra to the test by going to New Aiyansh, Terrace, or Prince Rupert/Port Edward for high school. This perception will probably persist until people see lots of evidence that exciting opportunities can appear in their own back yard. So offerings of courses and support at the local level may



initially meet resistance or lack of interest, and time and positive experience will have to take place before this changes perceptibly.

#### Specifics for Implementation of Program and Services Strategies

### **3.1 Establish and enhance awareness and support for online education programs**

The internet is the most rationale method of providing course offerings at the local level given the small numbers of likely participants. We encountered little interest in the internet as an approach to training and education. This is likely to be a concrete example of the mantra “training” means “opportunity” and “opportunity” lies “elsewhere” noted earlier. Like other aspects of this sustainable employment plan, changing this perception will be an interactive process. The first requirement will be for relevant and high quality course offerings. Developing such courses for the internet is a very costly process. Some of this potential expense can be offset by identifying programs that have already been developed elsewhere and can be economically adapted to the specific needs on the Nass. The other approach is to partner with institutions that have expertise and a ready stock of courses. The University of Northern British Columbia and Thompson River University have extensive online offerings. Perhaps they can be partnered with and would bear the costs of modest adaptations to appropriate courses for access to an eager student base on the Nass. This issue merits the attention of a specific committee with broad representation that will be able to survey needs on the Nass, review potential offerings that already exist and could be adapted if necessary, engage the negotiations which will make the most relevant and useful offerings available, and then monitor success and feedback with an eye to revisions.



### **3.2 Invest in students via career counselling and community development tools at a much earlier age**

A variety of career counselling and community development projects already exist and can be focused on in this component of our sustainable employment plan. What we propose is making how and where you are going to make your living a salient issue early in the educational process, and maintaining that focus through high school and into working life. There are traditional artists and crafts people in all the villages. Many elders are engaged in interesting self employment. Lots of people are making their way in independent business. Fishing, hunting, trapping, and resource extraction occupy the lives of many along the Nass. Business and government employ many. How many of these are a part of the school experience of each child? NESS graduation employment-visioning project should be the culmination of multiple experiences children have regarding smart, effective adults making their way in the world of economic survival and success. This would simply be in continuity with the traditional ways of passing on skills which has served the Nisga'a so well for centuries. Formalizing support for continued immersion in the world of work will require the cooperation and support of School District 92. It will also hinge upon the cultivation of an army of local mentors eager to share their experience. Another volunteer committee will need to take this on significant challenge.

### **3.3 Increase awareness of and resources for post-secondary trades and technical options, and student financial assistance that are within or as close to the Nass Valley as possible**

Part of the mandate of the "Labour Market Office" should be the development of a focused vision of a limited number of critically important trades and technical expertise that will be required and the financial resources that can be



accessed to move the Nass forward in the immediate and midterm future. When this vision is articulated and resources defined, those in Terrace need to be equal targets with those living in the Valley because of their special relation to the Nass. This information base needs to be routinely updated and refocused or it will lose its relevance and appeal. Making the Nass as appealing a place as possible in which to seek upgrading and employment is a major priority.

### **3.4 Increase essential skills and career and personal counselling**

Nothing will come of efforts to improve opportunities without appropriate and sensitive support. This does not mean this support has to be institutionalized or professional (read “costly”!) There are vigorous general literacy programs thriving in the Province using volunteers and sustained by grants from the Provincial and Federal governments and private industry (for information and support contact “Decoda Literacy Solutions”, [www.decoda.ca](http://www.decoda.ca)). For delivery of more formalized course offerings, WWNI is currently providing a base of instruction which might be prudently expanded in areas of their institutional expertise. Most of those in our survey who have taken WWNI courses have concentrated on Nisga’a culture and that base should be vigorously sustained, perhaps becoming a foundation from which tourism, and local arts and crafts training could be developed. Many participants had also taken business courses through WWNI and this core might be a base from which to develop large business/entrepreneurial course offerings that are mated to the assets so powerfully present on the Nass. The strong interest in “business” and self employment that emerged in our surveys will have to be examined in detail to determine the variety of courses and other supports that will meet people’s specific needs. It is possible that basic financial literacy, market research, and writing business plans will form a core. But it is probable that things like



business mentoring, peer support, liability issues, advertising, and self-care will be desired.

Increasing local food production was suggested as one area that could improve the available job options. While there is some expertise present in the Valley which could and should be mobilized, it is likely that moving forward with this initiative will first require an audit of the valley's agricultural assets and all the infrastructure that will be required to support substantial local food production. As with the dedicated folk in the literacy area, passion outweighs dollars, and it is likely that very highly qualified people (for example Michael Ableman, a world-recognized organic farmer working on Salt Spring Island) could be tempted to the Nass to spearhead this very worthy project with relatively little money spent.

We have made the case that cultivating commercial activity in the arts and culture arena makes very sound financial sense. The Nisga'a have a unique and very rich cultural and artistic tradition which can be honourably presented to the world.

As any serious offering of formal courses will require extensive expertise and resources, the liaison with the University of Northern British Columbia and Thompson River University suggested in the first component of this strategy might make it possible to offer meaningful support to the many on the Nass who want to chart an ambitious course of career development. Again, the challenges here are far from trivial and will require the collaboration of people from WWNI, UNBC, TRU, NLG, the employment counsellor, and as the needs and aspirations of those living in the different Villages are so diverse, significant input at the local level. The formal recognition of training beyond the Valley was a high priority for survey participants. The sooner this work is engaged, the better the positioning



of the Nisga'a to steer the course of development on the Nass.

The same approach can be taken with the development of the trades initially to support the badly needed improvement of housing stock. Aboriginal involvement in trades training in BC continues to evolve. The Nass Valley has the opportunity to forge ahead with innovating a made-on-the-Nass set of programs. This will require sustained collaboration with government agencies and institutions like BCIT to allow for the wide recognition valued by survey respondents. A tremendous opportunity to instigate and focus trades training emerges from the housing needs. The prominent improvement desired was for renovation of the existing housing stock. This work would require trained workers in all the building trades and might be able to be funded from Federal grants for First Nations housing. The long duration of most apprenticeship relationships will, in and of itself, confer stability to any program engaged.

Participants across all regions strongly desired an “increase in health professionals” (overall 30%), highest in Gingolx (40%) potentially due to its more isolated location area furthest down the valley. This gap is likely being fuelled by the current negative confidence in healthcare discussed in above sections regarding whether Nass valley healthcare can meet current or future needs. In efforts to halt this failure of confidence and support change, any realistic plans to bolster or improve healthcare - whether they are aimed at present or future implementation - should be clearly communicated to the Nisga'a people. Furthermore, if possible, it may be highly beneficial to actively seek out feedback on proposed initiatives that would integrate and connect the public and future generations in support of this essential service. Healthcare is an occupation for a lower proportion of the Nass population than is the circumstance for the rest of BC. As well, we have noted the relatively low regard for healthcare as a career choice. We made the case that improving people's understanding of their



own health status and advertising some of the advances made since promulgation of the treaty could improve this perception. Put this together with the current and anticipated challenges to health, and we have a strong case for emphasizing a variety of healthcare options, certainly in nursing and public health but also related areas like wellness coaching, improved fitness options, the provision of healthy food choices and the dissemination of more health oriented ideas about cooking, lifestyle, and activity.

#### 4 Career & Fulfillment

“To create a support system that fosters a culture of individual fulfillment and learning among employers to attract and retain skilled Nisga’a.”

##### Research Findings for Anchoring Career and Fulfillment Strategies

- Everywhere except beyond the Northwest more than half (up to 76%) of employers do not provide the means to upgrade job skills. This begs for the innovation of programs to support job-relevant learning. However it does not tell us what sorts of learning needs to be supported nor the format which would be most effective in providing that learning. Courses may be needed, but the need may be for broad work-related literacies, or more effective initial training, or perhaps mentoring systems.
- The vast majority of people expect that continued skill development is part of the job.
- Lack of opportunity is the leading reason people give for being unemployed (at almost 50%, the worst in Ginxwax), the implication being that, given the chance, people would choose gainful employment. The second major





reason is that “I don’t have the qualifications for most jobs.” The implications for education and training are obvious. “Student status” is a barrier to employment only in Terrace. This argues for Terrace being a major centre for education and upgrading for the Nass Valley.

- As might be expected, in New Aiyansh the top employer at 33% is the combination of social services, government, and recreation. This grouping is also a significant employer in the rest of the Nass and in Terrace as well. Business and Administration is a major employer in New Aiyansh, Laxgalts’ap, and both Terrace and Prince Rupert but much less prominent in Gingolx (7%) and Gitwinksihlkw (11%).
- Overall “cultural understanding” in health professionals is noted by only 3% of respondents and 8% desire to see the “caring and education of health professionals” increase. These results indicate that NVHA should consider plans aimed at increasing or promoting the cultural understanding and professional ability of the current workforce of healthcare professionals. This would support the deliverance of the level of caring, high quality service that would help increase people’s confidence in local healthcare and even inspire much needed youth to move into the health sector. The steering committee could consult “Holding Hope in Our Hearts”, a study prepared for and available from the Mental Health Commission of Canada. This strategy for increasing cultural safety in caring relationships is based on a research study from focus groups of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal practitioners and recipients of mental health services in five western Canadian cities: Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Yellow Knife, White Horse, and Iqaluit.



## Framework for Career and Fulfillment Strategies

Our opening comments when discussing the first strategy alluded to the Nisga'a being a proud people. This strategy anchors that pride to the workplace.

Assuming that we are able to increase employment, our attention has to shift to the quality of that employment experience. In support of the important "bottom line", employers need to honour their employees and employees need to regard their career as a special project from which they derive self satisfaction and through which they develop and grow. The case may be made that the tough economic times we are still living through have incurred a "rush for the bottom" in which businesses pay the least they can for labour, and in which the loyalty of and to workers is an archaic fiction. And that may in many situations be the case. But there are many examples of highly sustainable companies which are making a fiscally defensible virtue of investing in the development of their employee pool and expecting the same back. This strategy is rooted in that way of viewing work and the responsibilities of employers.

## Specifics for Implementing Career and Fulfillment Strategies

### **4.1 Support employers to integrate training that meets diverse cultural and learning needs**

This priority will flow from the initiatives outlined in previous sections. It is the reciprocal of careful work with supporting people searching for jobs. This would be seen as an extension of the work of the employment counsellor, the "Labour Market Office", and the "Labour Market Committee". The strong dynamic of self interest will encourage businesses to pay more than lip service to this principle (they are dependent to some degree on foregoing provide their labour force) and the various courses, mentoring relationships, apprenticeship agreements, and so forth that have been developed will remove barriers to participation. People



given positive and relatively easy options will usually make the appropriate choice.

#### **4.2 Create a program that promotes and facilitates business succession planning**

Once a model for succession planning is developed for all NLG entities (component 2.3) it will be relatively straightforward to make this available to local businesses. There will be plenty of stories to support the case that this activity is productive and effective, both in terms of the budget and the sense of control and confidence that it adds to the workplace.

#### **4.3 Support employers and self-employed, potential entrepreneurs, individuals to access training and support programs**

Again, this is simply a component of the role out of the educational and training options that will have been developed under strategies 1, 2, and 3. We can depend upon the programs and courses to do some of this work as it is in their direct self interest. The agents described in strategy 2 will carry responsibility for the documentation, which will be used to powerfully make the case that will bring others on board.

#### **4.4 Foster employer investment in workplace learning**

Once this employment plan has matured a bit and begins to bear the fruits of increased employment and entrepreneurial activity that we anticipate, it will be timely to approach businesses to encourage them to honour the investment that has been made on their behalf. The decision as to when this component is ready to engage will have to be done carefully and will hinge upon the accumulation of



both anecdotal and objective, bottom line evidence of the returns that derive from a coordinated and sustainable employment plan.

## APPENDICES:

### **Appendix 1: Support Documentation**

1. Nisga'a Lisims Government Resolution:



# Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive

## Resolution 2007/124

Resolved that:

the executive authorizes the Director of Programs and Services to undertake a project to develop a Labour Market Plan to assist the Nisga'a Lisims Government in determining the human resource and training needs of Nisga'a citizens in accordance with the memo presented to the executive, attached as an Appendix 1 to this resolution.

This Resolution may be signed by the Chairperson.

Adopted Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Signed



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for



2. Support Letters for Labour Market Project

A) Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government

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## *New Aiyansh Village Government*

P.O. BOX 233, 6200 SKATEEN AVENUE NEW AIYANSH, B.C. V0J 1A0

JUNE 3, 2009,

MR. CAL ALBRIGHT, DIRECTOR  
PROGRAMS & SERVICES,  
NISGA'A LISIM GOVERNMENT,  
NEW AIYANSH, B.C. V0J 1A0

DEAR CAL,

RE: NISGA'A LABOUR MARKET SURVEY,

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT NEW AIYANSH VILLAGE GOVERNMENT IS IN FULL SUPPORT OF THE LABOUR  
MARKET SURVEY INITIATIVE SUBMITTED BY NISGA'A LISIM GOVERNMENT.

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY CONTACT ME AT 25-633-3107.

SINCERELY,  
NEW AIYANSH VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

  
DARLENE MORGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



TOLL FREE NUMBER: 1-877-588-2388  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (250) 633-3100  
FAX NUMBER: (250) 633-2271



B) Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw

for internal use only







**NISGA'A VILLAGE OF GITWINKSIHLKW**

3004 Ts'oshi Ts'ap Avenue, P.O. Box 1,

Gitwinksihlkw BC V0J 3T0

TELEPHONE: 250-633-2294

FACSIMILE: 250-633-2588



April 17, 2009

File: 400

Nisga'a Lisims Government  
2000 Lisims Drive  
New Alyansh, BC  
V0J 1A0

Attention: Mr. Cal Albright, Director of Programs & Services

Dear Cal;

Re: Letter of Support

This is a letter of support for the Nisga'a Labour Market Study.

For further information please contact our offices at 250-633-2294.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

**NISGA'A VILLAGE OF GITWINKSIHLKW**

Per:

Harry Nyce Jr., BSc, MBA  
Chief Executive Officer

C) Laxgalts'ap Village Government

for internal use only



## LAXGALTS'AP Village Government

P.O. Box 4250 Greenwood, B.C. V9T 1X6  
Phone: (250) 621-5212  
Fax: (250) 621-3330  
Toll Free: 1-877-447-0277

June 2, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Letter of support Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan (NSEP)**

Laxgalts'ap Village Government supports Nisga'a Lisims Government's proposal to develop a Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan (NSEP). We recognize the need to develop a comprehensive labour market plan for the four Nisga'a Villages of the Nass Valley and the Urban Societies (Prince Rupert, Terrace & Vancouver corridor) that will form a baseline for assisting in policy development and position training and education to prepare Nisga'a citizens to be self sufficient. The unemployment rate among Nisga'a citizens (age 15-65) living in the Nass Valley is an unacceptable 61% (compared to 56% in 2003). Fisheries and forestry, the two main drivers of the regional economy only a decade ago, are now together employing only approximately 15% of the Nisga'a labour force.

The NSEP will provide a framework and process for the Nisga'a communities to explore their core values, establish a vision for the future, and work toward achieving that vision.

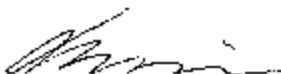
Once in place, the benefits of NSEP can: Empower the communities, improve performance, build teamwork, build expertise, coordinate future development, protect resources, celebrate traditions & culture, promote healing and reconciliation and create economic opportunities.

Laxgalts'ap Village Government understands the Scope of Project, including:

1) Recognize needs; 2) Develop an inventory of current capacity; 3) Identify Existing Gaps; and 4) Map a plan of Action: What programs and services should NLC and Village Governments and urban locals be creating and supporting to ensure that all projected employment skill gaps are eliminated over the next 10 years.

We look forward to being included with this initiative.

Yours sincerely,



Willard Martin  
Chief Councillor

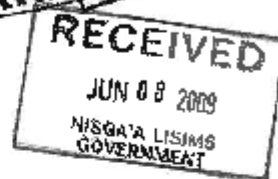
"A DWELLING PLACE COMPRISED OF DWELLING PLACES."



D) Gingolx Village Government

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June 2, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Letter of Support Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan (NSEP)**

The Nisga'a Village of Gingolx as led by the Gingolx Village Government would like to support Nisga'a Lisims Government's need to develop a Comprehensive Labour Market Plan for the four Nisga'a Communities, as well as for the 3 Nisga'a Urban Local Offices, (Prince Rupert, Terrace, & Vancouver, B.C.)

The Gingolx Village Government (G.V.G.) understands that this will form the baseline for assisting in policy development, position training and education to prepare Nisga'a Citizens to be self-sufficient.

The employment rate for Nisga'a citizens between the ages of 15-16 living within the Valley is unacceptable at 61%. This is compared to the 56% in 2003. Fishery and Forestry, the two main economic drivers 10 years ago; together now only employs about 15% of the Nisga'a Labour force.

The NSEP will provide a framework and process for the Nisga'a Communities to explore their current values, establish and/or renew, the vision with a plan to achieve that vision.

Once in place, the benefits of NSEP can:

- Empower the Communities – Improve performance – build teamwork, build expertise & coordinate future development – protect resources – celebrate traditions and culture – promote healing & reconciliation and create economic opportunities.

.../2

607 Front Street, (P.O. Box 110) Gingolx, B.C. V0V 1B0  
 P# 250-326-4212 Fax # 250-326-4208 Toll Free 1-800-736-5511



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*Page #2 – Letter of Support*

The G.V.G. understand that the scope of the project will cover 4 major areas in the Labour Market Plan for the Nass Valley.

1. Recognize Needs
2. Inventory Current Capacity
3. Identify Existing Gaps
4. Map a plan of Action: what programs and services should N.L.G. and Village Governments along with the 3 Urban Locals be creating and supporting to ensure that all projected employment skill gaps are eliminated over the next 10 years.

Gingolx Village Government looks forward to being included with this venture, which will benefit all of our members both resident and our members in the urban area.

Sincerely,

  
George R. Moore  
Interim Village Manager

cc:

- G.V.G. Files
- G.V.G. Members

## **Appendix 2: Attendance at all Project Meetings**

### **Steering Committee Meetings**

June 28, 2010

Attendance: Kim Hansen, SD #92; Lydia Stephens, NVHA; Marlene Robinson, Terrace Nisga'a Society; Carol S Doolan, Gitmaxmak'ay; Bert Mercer, NLG; Roy Clayton, NLG (YOY-NLG); Calvin Albright, NLG, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator); Noah Guno (Videographer) ;Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

September 8, 2010

Attendance: Oscar Mercer, Council of Elders Chairperson, NLG; Nita Morven, AND- NLG; Ruth Robinson, Gitlaxt'aamiks; Juanita Parnell, Gitmaxmak'ay; Bert Mercer, NLG; Rachel Robinson , Laxgalts'ap; Marlene Robinson, Terrace Nisga'a Society; Chris Young, NLG; Kim Hanson, SD #92; Calvin Albright, NLG; Noah Guno (Videographer); Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator) ; Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

August 10, 2011





Attendance: Kim Hansen, SD #92; Bess Leeson, Gitmaxmak'ay; Sherry Bejcar, Gitlaxt'aamiks; Francine Gurney, Gitlaxt'aamiks; Calvin Albright, NLG; Edward Allen, NLG; Stephanie Azak, NLG; Noah Guno (Videographer); Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator); Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

### **Community Town Hall Meetings**

#### Gitwinksihlkw- October 19, 2010

Attendance: Bruce Azak, Vernon Azak, Steven Bolton Sr., Debbie Azak, Kimberly Azak, Jacob Nyce, Alvin Azak, Norma Morgan, Corinne McKay, Alice Nyce, Stephen Nyce, Harry Nyce Jr., Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

#### Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society - October 26, 2010

Attendance: Charles Skinner, Jonah Paul, Yvonne Green, Jeanette Williams, Catherine Clayton, Hazel Stewart, Angela Gonu, Blossom Stevens, Susan Trimble, Darlene Harris Wolfe, Judy Angus, Inez Shanoss, Lavina Nelson, Carol S Doolan, Herman Stewart, Dayna Nelson, Doris Stevens, John Stewart, Freda Stewart, Charles J McNeil, Camilla Haines, Maury Clark, Carmen Adams, Clarence Martin, Terry Gonu, Sharon Azak, Harvey Calder, Adelia Harris, Flora Haldane, Vallary Hoffe, Nora Barton, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

#### Gingolx- November 9, 2010



Attendance: Max Lincoln, Melvin Barton, Madelon Mottet, Raymond Stewart Jr., Currie Stewart, Teresa Moore, Abby Stewart, Claude Barton, Terry Edgars, Dean Doolan, Arlene Lincoln, Tessa Venn, Kayla Barton, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

Gitlaxt'aamiks - November 9, 2010

Attendance: Bertram Gonu, Phillip Morven, Vincent Johnson Sr., Gerry Gonu Sr., Lorraine Derrick, Elaine Barton, Gertrude Guno, Georgina Harris, Mary Davis, Lorene Plante, Kenny Percival, Brad Percival, Dean Haizimsque, Beatrice Oleman, Michelle Oleman, Rosie Robinson, Melvin Robinson, Leona Gonu, Terra Barton, Louise Martian, Charmaine Peal, Daphne Robinson, Darlene Morgan, Sherry Bejcar, Sadie Robinson, Jane Morven, John R Clayton, Paula Clayton, Chris Clayton, Maryanne Guno, Kirby Guno, Raven Guno, Cyndi Peal, Calvin Albright (NLG), Bert Mercer (NLG), Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

Terrace Nisga'a Society - November 10, 2010

Attendance: Roxanne Woods, Susan Guno, Bonita Young-Mercer, Myrna Stevens, Vina Percival, Rhea Percival, Frances Aksidan, Charlotte Aksidan, Julia Brinson, Diana Guno, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

Laxgalts'ap - November 16, 2010

Attendance: Clyde Martin, Bonnie Stevens, Marina Mercer, Crystal Bright, Flora Bright, Teresa Yeomans, Dominic Moore, Stephen Moore Jr., Mel Stevens, Samson Stevens, Gary B Stephens, Kelly Clayton, Steve Moore, Brenda



Robinson, Lorne McKay, Alec Angus, Selina Sampare, Reg Sampare, Delores McKay, Andrew Mercer, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

### **Community Focus Groups**

#### Terrace Nisga'a Society- June 9, 2011

Attendance: Diana Guno, Phyllis Adams, Vina Percival, Myrna Stevens, Marlene Davis, Emily Clark (NLG), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

#### Gitmaxmak'ay Nisga'a Society - June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Attendance: Juanita Parnell, Les Clayton, Richard Leeson, Carmen Adams, Calvin Albright (NLG), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

#### Laxgalts'ap- June 22, 2011

Attendance: Gloria Murdock-Smith, Janice Stephens, Janice Stevens, Alec Angus, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

#### Gitwinksihlkw- June 23, 2011

Attendance: Stephen Bolton Sr., Kimberly Azak, Charles Morven, Harry Nyce Jr., Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)



Gitlaxt'aamiks - June 23, 2011

Attendance: Keith Clayton, Sadie O'Donaghey, Sherry Bejcar, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

Gingolx - June 24, 2011

Attendance: Abby Stewart, Teresa Moore, Sally Nyce (LMP Coordinator), Noah Guno (Videographer), Brent Mainprize (Consultant)

(Note: Names may be missing due to ineligible writing)



-----Survey Copy-----

CAMBER

## **Nisga'a Sustainable Employment Plan Survey**

### **Survey Preamble:**

Hi my name is (surveyor name here), I am administering a survey on behalf of NLG.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this important community-based survey of the Nisga'a nation! The results of this survey will help identify your needs and challenges to ensure a skilled and fully employed future workforce here in the Nass now and in the future. This survey will take only 15 to 20 minutes.

A reminder that your responses are confidential and the final report will only include the compiled responses from the Nisga'a nation. THANK YOU AGAIN!

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **(1) Demographic Information:**

1-1: Do you have a Nisga'a citizenship number?   Y   N

1-1a If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

1-2: What is your street address and community (your home)

\_\_\_\_\_

1-3: Is the owner of the home you are living in 65 or older?   Y   N

1-4: Male or female (circle one)



1-5: Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

1-5a: Is this different than where you consider your hometown to be? Y N

1-5b: If yes, where is your hometown? \_\_\_\_\_

1-5c: What Nisga'a village is your family from? \_\_\_\_\_

1-6: Do you currently live on Nisga'a lands? Y N

1-6-a: If yes, which village? \_\_\_\_\_

1-6-b: If no, where? \_\_\_\_\_

1-7: What is your age? under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+

1-8: What is your current marital status:

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Common Law
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

1-9: How many dependants do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

1-10: How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

1-11a: What are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_



1-11b: How many of your children live in the Nass Valley? \_\_\_\_\_

1-11c: Are you a single parent? \_\_\_\_\_

1-12: Do you plan to move within the next five years? Y N

1-12a: If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

1-13: What is your personal annual income:

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000-\$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000-\$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000-\$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 or more
- ☐ Unsure

1-14: Household income

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000-\$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000-\$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000-\$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 or more
- ☐ Unsure

## **(2) Employment Questions:**

2-1: Are you currently employed? Y N self-employed

2-1a: If no, what is the reason for this?



- Lack of opportunity
- I do not have the qualification level for most jobs
- Family matters
- Transportation
- Availability
- Downsizing
- Student
- Health
- Disability
- Self-employed
- Other

2-1b: If yes, what is your current employment?

\_\_\_\_\_ (job title)

2-2: What types of jobs would you like to see in the Nass Valley?

\_\_\_\_\_

2-3: Do you want to be employed in something you can't find in the Nass Valley (Urban Local)? Y N

2-3a: If yes, what is the job?

\_\_\_\_\_

2-4: Are there jobs in the Nass Valley that you would like to work in but are not qualified for? Y N





2-4a: If yes, what is the job? \_\_\_\_\_

2-5: In the past 5 years, what length of time (in total) have you been employed?

- ☐ All 5 years
- ☐ 4-5 years
- ☐ 3-4 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ less than 1 year

2-6: Rank the top 3 ways to learn about job opportunities.

- ☐ Trade or professional
- ☐ Employment agency
- ☐ Email and Internet
- ☐ Nisga'a Nation Knowledge Network (NNKN)
- ☐ NLG, Village or Urban Local office
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Word of Mouth
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2-7: Are you looking for work with different employer? Y N

2-7a: If yes, what is the length of time (in months) you have been looking for work with a different employer? \_\_\_\_\_

2-8: How many years until you plan to retire?

- ☐ Already retired
- ☐ Within a year
- ☐ 1-5 yrs
- ☐ 5-10 yrs
- ☐ more than 10 yrs
- ☐ Unsure



2-9: Have you left a job by a local employer in the past five years? Y N

2-9a: If yes, what were the reasons for leaving?

- ☐ Lack of career development opportunities
- ☐ Lack of opportunities to advance
- ☐ Management and supervision
- ☐ Work environment
- ☐ Wages
- ☐ Work demands
- ☐ Hours of work
- ☐ Seasonal
- ☐ Incentives (i.e., bonuses)
- ☐ Benefits
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Cultural and/or family obligations
- ☐ Other

2-10: Do your current skills meet the requirement for your employment? Y N

2-10a: Does your current employer provide on the job training? Y N

2-11: Do you wish to upgrade your skills in the next 5 years? Y N

2-11a: If yes, where would you like to train;

- ☐ the Nass Valley,
- ☐ Terrace or Prince Rupert
- ☐ outside the Northwest
- ☐ Online education
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2-11b: What would be your desired occupations after completing education or training?



---

### (3) Education / Skills:

3-1: Where did you attend elementary school?

- ☐ Nass Valley
- ☐ Terrace
- ☐ Prince Rupert / Port Edward
- ☐ Other

3-2: What elementary school grade did you complete? \_\_\_\_\_

3-3: Where did you attend secondary school?

- ☐ Nass Valley
- ☐ Terrace
- ☐ Prince Rupert / Port Edward
- ☐ Other

3-4: What secondary (high school) grade did you complete? \_\_\_\_\_

3-4a: Did you graduate secondary school? Y N

3-4b: Have you attended an upgrading program? Y N

3-5: Have you attended post-secondary? Y N (eg. University, College, Trades etc.)

3-5a: If yes, what did you receive?

- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree



- Other
- None

3-5b: If so, in what field?

---

3-5c: Are you now employed in this field? Y N

3-6: What level of involvement did your family have in your education?

- Highly involved
- Somewhat Involved
- Not Involved

3-7: Have you attended WWNI (Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute)? Y N

3-7a: If yes, what course / program? \_\_\_\_\_

3-8: If you had the opportunity to advance your education or training, would you?

Y N

3-9: It is known there is high unemployment in the Nass Valley. What types of training courses / programs are needed here in the Nass Valley?



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3-10: How important is it that the training courses / programs be recognized by other institutions?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important

3-11: Does the education service in the Nass Valley meet your needs at the present time?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Completely
- ☐ Exceeds what I need

3-12: If you were to start a small business, what would it be?

---

3-13: What is stopping you from starting the business?



- Red Tape (government support, business licenses, regulations etc.)
- External Money (Funding Programs)
- Internal Money (my saving)
- Confidence
- Experience
- Business Planning
- Management Knowledge
- Time
- Already in business for myself

3-14: Would you require training before starting your business? Y N

3-14a: If yes, what type?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **(4) Housing:**

4-1: How many occupants in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

4-2: How many family units are in your household? (eg. brother's family, aunt, mother, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

4-2a: Why is there more than one family unit living in your household?

- Lack of available housing in the community
- Because of money
- Because of family support needed (helping family)
- Because we want to live together
- Recently relocated
- Recently evicted
- Special Needs (eg. Wheelchair access)



4-3: What is the age range among adults in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

4-4: How would you describe your current accommodation?

- ☐ More than adequate
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Inadequate

4-4a: If inadequate, what can be done to improve the conditions?

\_\_\_\_\_

4-5: What are 3 things (in order) you would change about housing in the Nass Valley?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_

## **(5) Culture:**

5-1: Can you carry on a conversation (speak) in the Nisga'a language?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Fluently

5-2: Do you understand the Nisga'a language?



- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Fluently

5-3: Can you read and write the Nisga'a language?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Fluently

5-4: Do you consider oral story telling important to the Nisga'a culture?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important

5-5: Do you consider technology (for example- computer technology) important to the Nisga'a culture?

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important

5-6: How often do you participate in the Nisga'a culture (eg. feasts, ceremonies, community events, dancing, etc)?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1 per month
- ☐ 2-3 per month
- ☐ 3-4 per month
- ☐ 4-5 per month
- ☐ 5+ per month





5-7: What are you most proud of as a Nisga'a?

---

5-8: What are you least proud of as a Nisga'a?

---

5-9: What are 3 things (in order of importance) that you hope the next generation of Nisga'a will know about our culture?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

5-10: How would you describe the Nisga'a culture?

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## 6) Health and Wellness:

6-1: How would you rate your current state of health 1-5? (5= perfect health, 1=



unhealthy) 1 2 3 4 5

6-2: Do you consider yourself healthier now than you were 5 years ago? Y N

6-2a: Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6-3: Do you use natural medicines (from the Nass Valley)? Y N

6-3a: If yes, what types? \_\_\_\_\_

6-4: Does the health care services in the Nass Valley meet your needs at the present time?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Completely
- ☐ Exceeds what I need

6-5: Do you think the health care services in the Nass Valley as they exist today will meet your needs in 10 years?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Completely
- ☐ Exceeds what I need

6-6: What are the 3 best attributes (in order) of our health care in the Nass Valley?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_



6-7: What are 3 things (in order) you would change about our health care in the Nass Valley?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_

Final Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your information kept on file in an employment database for job opportunities?   Y   N   \_\_\_\_\_ signature here



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