

TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & NATION-BUILDING SUMMIT

**OECD Tribal Economic
Development Objectives
Suzanne M. Burcell, MBA, MA**

HSU's Vision

Thematic in HSU's vision statements for many years have been commitments to:

- Improve the human condition
- Promote social and environmental responsibility
- Increase diversity of people and perspectives
- Be exemplary partners with surrounding communities, including Tribal Nations.

HSU's Track Record

- 1966 Center for Indian Community Dev.
- 1969 Indian Teacher Education/ITEPP
- 1974 NACENR/INRSEP
- American Indian College Motivation Day
- 1997 Native American Studies Major
- 2000 American Indian Education Minor
- 2006 Coalition for AIs in Computing
- 2007 OECD Indian Economic Development
- 2008 Rural Business Opportunity Grant
- 2009 Tribal Management Certificate Program
(funded by Hoopa CATEP & US Dept. of Ed.)

Tribal Economic & Community Development Challenges

- A history of forcible removal from Native lands with accompanying losses of human life and subsistence economies.
- Impaired relationships with, and distrust of, federal, state, and local governments.
- Relatively brief experience with federal models of government and capitalism.
- Even briefer experience with Tribal self-determination and self-governance.
- (Owing to this history) low educational attainment, high unemployment, and limited access to investment capital and market opportunities.

Tribal Economic & Community Development Challenges

Today Tribes are striving to:

- reacquire and reclaim their lands and rivers (often contaminated or deteriorated by decades of poor mining, logging, and other resource extraction practices);
- develop basic physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, water/sewer/solid waste management systems, power and telecommunications systems);
- provide basic community services (e.g., health, education, housing, safety/security, and child/family services); and
- develop their own capacities to govern their Tribal nations and manage complex Tribal organizations based on the prescribed federal government model.

Tribal Economic & Community Development Strategies

Before Tribally-operated casinos started in the 1980s, Tribal development efforts generally focused on land acquisition, then physical infrastructure development, then other basic services; e.g., health, education, housing, and social services.

Economic development includes efforts to attract new industries, support local entrepreneurship, and develop Tribally-owned enterprises (diversifying beyond natural resource extraction).

Between 1990 and 2000, the per capita incomes of Tribal communities grew at 2-3 times the rate of the nation as a whole, yet remained at less than half the national average.

This is true for both gaming and non-gaming Tribes.

The Harvard Project

According to the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development:

- *Indian nations are taking hold of self-determination and making the most of it. At the same time, Indian Country has had such large deficits to make up, such extremes of unemployment, low income, and lack of personal and community wealth accumulation to overcome, that 10-20 years of economic growth is not going to eliminate poverty and its accompanying social distress (2008, p. 112).*
- *The key to successful Tribal economic development has not been solely the cash flowing from casinos or natural resource endowments (many successful Tribes have neither), but rather a strong belief in self-determination.*

OECD's Role in Tribal Economic Development

- Tribes identify their needs and request help.
- OECD facilitates Tribal links to regional resource agencies, including campus- and community-based organizations (AEDC, NCIDC, SBDCs).
- OECD encourages and supports faculty, staff, and students to serve Tribal communities.
- OECD provides training and technical assistance to Tribes: to assess community assets and needs, formulate long-range community and economic development strategies and plans, identify market opportunities, and develop enterprises and work forces aligned with identified opportunities.

OECD's One-Year RBOG Objectives

- Tribal Economic Development Summit
- Survey of Tribes' Training & TA Needs
- Seminar on Conducting Comprehensive Community Needs Assessments
- Assistance with at least 2 Assessments
- Seminar on Preparing Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies
- Assistance with at least 2 CEDS Documents
- Referrals to Regional Resource Providers
- Referrals to/Coordination with North Coast SBDCs to promote and support participation by Indian entrepreneurs

Contact Information

Suzanne M. Burcell, MBA, MA Education
Director of American Indian Education
and

Associate Director for Indian Economic &
Community Development

Humboldt State University

smb7001@humboldt.edu

(707) 826-5195