

# National Youth Project FAQs



## **Q: What is the goal of the project**

**A:** To raise \$20,000 to provide potable drinking water and sanitation facilities to one home in Pikangikum, Ontario, by equipping the home with a cistern to hold the water and a waste-water holding tank, and all the necessary fixtures and fittings. The National Youth Project is part of a larger Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) project to provide water to ten homes.

## **Q: What first brought Pikangikum's water issues to our attention?**

**A:** The community made international headlines a few years ago when a wave of youth suicides marked this small community with the highest known per capita suicide rate in the world.

## **Q: What role did the local community take in addressing the water needs of the Pikangikum community?**

**A:** Local input has come from the Chief and members of Council (C&C), elders and the school system. The community identified twelve key priorities, including the construction of creative and empowering housing, water and food solutions. The C&C provided input on the project proposal submitted to PWRDF and expressed their commitment to participate in development, community support, contribution (cash or in-kind), implementation and ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the project, as well as to select all ten houses to be retrofitted for water and waste-water service. Members of the households receiving the water and waste-water systems in their homes will be trained to install and maintain their system. The C&C will work with staff at the water treatment plant to ensure proper operation.

## **Q: Is Pikangikum affected by other needs?**

**A:** The community is affected by a diversity of interrelated factors, including housing, water and food security issues. These factors need to be addressed together in order to find a sustainable, locally-led solution for Pikangikum. Challenges include:

- Poverty and lack of gainful employment;
- Largely absent community infrastructure;
- Unreliable power source to the hydro grid and reliance on diesel;
- Substandard, overcrowded housing;
- Food and water security;

- Isolation, which presents challenges and expenses to improving infrastructure;
- Backdrop of colonialism, racism and social exclusion arising from the historical plight of First Nations people including the effect of residential schools; and
- Many youth experience a tension between traditional culture and contemporary consumer society, which produce mental health and identity issues.

The following excerpt from the *North South Partnership for Children and the Pikangikum Community Members Participatory Assessment of Pikangikum*, February 2008, p.14, describes the challenges faced by the youth in the community:

*"Many Nishnawbe Aski young people are struggling with questions of who they are and where they belong. They are exposed to lavish lifestyle through the media, while attending urban high schools, and when travelling to larger centres; but the living conditions of the families and communities leave them with only the reality of extreme poverty. They are called "Indians" but they know that they are not "Indians." They know that their lifeline should be connected to the land and its resources, but nothing in the mainstream education system or the media helps them build this connection. They wonder who they are or why they exist. Coupled with the physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse that has become intergenerational as a result of residential schools and loss of identity, it is not surprising that some young people decide it is easier to leave this world than to live in it. Suicide comes to be a viable alternative when there seems to be no hope of finding help or relief from an unending cycle of poverty and abuse: social, racial, physical and sexual."*

## **Q: What is the federal government's responsibility when it comes to First Nations in Canada?**

**A:** Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's (AANDC) responsibilities and its partnerships with First Nation people and communities range from negotiating

land claim and self-government agreements to providing social services, education and economic development. These activities support AANDC's vision, and help to maintain and strengthen the relationship between the Government of Canada and First Nations people. (www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013791/1100100013795)

**Q: Why isn't the federal government currently addressing the needs of the Pikangikum community?**

**A:** This is complicated. Over ten years ago the federal government promised to work towards a solution to the water issue in Pikangikum. It is their responsibility under the Indian Act. The reality is that the cost of solving the water issue in Pikangikum will cost over \$77 million. It would seem that there are priority and funding blocks, and the government has not committed to any funding or programming to date. Through this project we are taking an interim step to addressing this bigger problem; modelling how to provide water is being demonstrated.

**Q: What can we do to encourage the federal government to address the community's needs?**

**A:** Canadians should speak with their local member of Parliament and to the Government of Canada.

**Q: Are other indigenous communities in Canada affected by similar issues?**

**A:** Yes, many indigenous communities in Canada are affected by similar issues.

**Q: If other communities are affected by similar issues, why are we focusing on Pikangikum?**

**A:** Feeling called to address water issues, the National Youth Project worked through PWRDF to find an opportunity to make a difference in a respectful way that is rooted in relationships. Through PWRDF, we joined a conversation among several groups who are concerned about water issues in indigenous communities. The relationship with Pikangikum emerged from this conversation. This initiative is considered as a pilot project that provides a model of dynamic partnership among PWRDF, ACIP (Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples) and the Office of the National Anglican Indigenous Bishop.

## Funding Questions

**Q: What partners are involved in the Right to Water Project?**

**A:**

— *The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF)* is the relief and development agency of the Anglican Church of Canada. PWRDF received the application to provide water to ten homes in Pikangikum and reviewed the merits of the project according to their policies for development. *justgeneration.ca* is the youth initiative of PWRDF. Since 2010, they have worked with the ELCIC on the National Youth Project. *justgeneration.ca* promotes the National Youth Project among Anglican youth and facilitates communication between the ELCIC and PWRDF.

— *The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)* has a long tradition of National Youth Projects, selected by the Program Committee for Youth Ministry (PCYM). Since 2010, PCYM has worked in partnership with the *justgeneration.ca* to choose a National Youth Project. For this project, the ELCIC will collect funds for the National Youth Project and forward them to PWRDF. The ELCIC also promotes the National Youth Project among Lutheran youth.

— *Office of the National Anglican Indigenous Bishop (NAIB)* has been the key gathering place for various partners who have been called to this conversation and project.

— *Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Water)* is a group of Anglican and Lutheran volunteers who asked PWRDF to help them develop a strategic giving project in the community of Pikangikum. They meet regularly in Aurora, Ontario.

— *Pikangikum Working Group (PWG)* is a Toronto based group of professionals committed to addressing needs in the Pikangikum community. The role of PWG was to:

- Work with the Chief and Council to identify the needs of the community;
- Prepare specific Project Proposals to meet the needs;
- Identify sources of funding to implement the Project Proposal; and
- Identify organizations that can implement the projects.

Now that the project is underway, PWG monitors and reports on the progress of the implementation of the project to ensure it meets the needs identified by the Chief and Council and the funding organizations.

— *Frontiers Foundation* is the implementing partner and is responsible for administration on the ground.

— *The Office of Indigenous Ministries and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)* is an integral part of the governance structure of the Anglican Church of Canada. ACIP offers wisdom and advice on the development of right relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the context of this project.

**Q: How can we be sure that donated funds are going where we're told they are?**

**A:** PWRDF monitors development projects around the world on a daily basis. Our confidence comes from the due diligence of PWRDF staff and through the relationships developed in order to accomplish this goal.

**Q: When/how will we receive updates?**

**A:** Representatives from PWRDF will post regular updates to:

**justgeneration.ca:** [www.justgeneration.ca/resources/national-youth-project/](http://www.justgeneration.ca/resources/national-youth-project/)

**ELCIC:** [elcic.ca/Youth/RightToWater.cfm](http://elcic.ca/Youth/RightToWater.cfm)

**CLAY 2014: WORTH IT:** [claygathering.ca/national-youth-project/](http://claygathering.ca/national-youth-project/)

## Community Questions

**Q: Where is Pikangikum?**

**A:** Pikangikum is a remote fly-in town of 2,400 people, located in northern Ontario, approximately 100 kilometres north of Red Lake. It can only be accessed by winter roads across Lake Pikangikum, by aircraft, or water access.

**Q: What is the current state of plumbing/waste-water infrastructure in Pikangikum?**

**A:** Of the 450 homes in the community, 430 (95%) do not have drinking water or waste-water services.

**Q: What is the current state of the water treatment plant in Pikangikum?**

**A:** The water treatment plant in the community is 16 years old. Through underground pipes, it delivers water to distribution points where people collect their drinking water in containers. On April 15, 2011, Pikangikum First Nation declared a state of emergency due to a lack of potable and running water.

**Q: How will this project help clean water get into homes in the community?**

**A:** For each home, the project provides a cistern for the

potable water, a holding tank for waste water and the necessary fixtures and fittings.

**Q: How many homes will receive clean water and a waste-water system as a result of this project?**

**A:** Ten homes will receive clean water and a waste-water system as a result of the overall project. The National Youth Project is aiming to equip one home with clean water and a waste-water system.

**Q: What about the remaining homes in the community?**

**A:** The current project is one step in addressing a large problem. Pikangikum leaders and their partners will continue to address water and other issues for the community.

**Q: How will equipping 10 homes with this infrastructure positively affect the community's conditions?**

**A:** By equipping the 10 homes with water infrastructure, this project is taking one step to restore dignity and provide hope to the members of the Pikangikum community. During his visit to Pikangikum in November 2013, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Sean Atleo, visited one of the first homes to receive running cold and hot water in their home. He remarked that he saw the dignity returned to the family, the four generations living in that house.

**Q: Is this a sustainable solution?**

**A:** The cistern and waste-water holding tank system were chosen to address the particular geographical context of the community. The project includes training of plumbers and electricians while installing the water and waste-water systems and training of the homeowners to work with operators at the water treatment plant to monitor the safety of the water.

**Q: What are the next steps planned to address the sustainability of this project?**

**A:** The leaders in Pikangikum and their partners continue to address 12 priorities for developing a healthy and sustainable community. The current commitment of the National Youth Project is to provide water to one home and to intentionally engage Right to Water issues until the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering in 2016.

**Q: What technology is being used to equip the homes?**

**A:** The water and waste-water system for each home includes:

- A water holding tank or cistern;
- A waste water holding tank;
- Water heater and pump to pressurize the water system; and
- Fixtures and fittings to provide access to the water and waste-water system.

**Q: How are households chosen to receive clean water and waste-water systems?**

**A:** The ten homes are being selected by the community. The Chief and Council are responsible for facilitating the selection process and for reporting on the process to the partners in this project.

## Cultural Questions

**Q: What language(s) are spoken in Pikangikum?**

**A:** The Pikangikum First Nation is an Ojibway First Nation. The language spoken is Ojibwemowin, the major dialect of Anishinaabe peoples.

A 2005 Wawatay Native Communications Society survey found that the residents of Pikangikum have one of the highest rates of original language retention of any First Nation in northern Ontario.

**Q: What are the local words for water? How do you pronounce that?**

**A:** The Ojibwemowin word for 'water' is 'nipi' (pronounced nee-pee).