



Indspire

Indigenous education,
Canada's future.

L'éducation des autochtones.
L'avenir du Canada.

**Appearance before the House of Commons
Standing Committee on Finance**

Federal Government Pre-Budget Consultations

**Remarks by Roberta Jamieson
President and CEO, Indspire**

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Ottawa**

Sekon! Bonjour, Booze, Good afternoon! Best greetings to each of you!

Thank you for having me here today to present my thoughts on **supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians by focusing on health, education, and training.**

I would first like to acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation, so I begin this morning by acknowledging and thanking them.

My name is Roberta Jamieson, and I am the President and CEO of Indspire.

As you prepare the next federal budget, you will hear a number of opinions about where to spend, where to cut, and how to best use our tax dollars.

Some would say they do not envy the position you are in. To be honest, I do, because I know exactly where funds are needed and where the federal government can achieve a high rate of return on its investments.

I am here to share with you my thoughts on where investments must be made if we are to make a real difference in supporting and advancing the future prospects of our Indigenous population, a vulnerable group for sure, but one ready to prosper.

But before I begin, let me tell you a little about Indspire.

Indspire is a national, Indigenous-led, registered charity that invests in the education of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people for the long term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada. Since 1985, Indspire has pursued its vision of enriching Canada by advancing Indigenous achievement through educational programs and the promotion and advancement of Indigenous cultural, social, and economic achievements.

Outside the federal government, we are the largest funder of Indigenous education in the country. To date, our *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries and Scholarship Awards* program has disbursed almost \$65 million in financial support to Indigenous students from coast to coast to coast through close to 20,000 bursaries and scholarships.

I am proud to tell you that 2013-2014 was a banner year for Indspire.

- Over \$10 million awarded to Indigenous students through more than 3,000 bursaries and scholarships
- Over 700 awards to Indigenous students to pursue health career-related studies
- 2,250 awards for post-secondary studies
- Over 2,000 students and educators participated in Indspire's *Soaring* career conferences
- 449 students across Canada learned about careers in radio, television, and mining through the *Industry in the Classroom* program, and
- 232 educators were matched through our *Peer Support* coaching program.

Finally, since 2007, Indspire has supported just under 300 students pursue their **PhDs**. What this tells me is that our bursaries and scholarships are not only assisting our students with *access* to post-secondary education, but also helping them achieve *academic excellence* in their fields.

Now let me tell you what I am **most excited** about.

A few months back, Indspire committed to assessing the impact that our financial awards program has had on the students we've supported. To do this, we reached out to students with a survey asking them where they are in their lives and what they are doing. Of the 7,600 students contacted, we received 1,400 responses.

I am extremely pleased **to share for the first time** some very exciting figures from this survey.

- Of the students we've supported with financial assistance who are now out of school, 91% indicated they graduated
- 83% of these graduates are now employed
- 52% of these graduates received an undergraduate degree; 18% a graduate degree; and 17% a college diploma
- 82% of the students who graduated and are employed are now serving the Indigenous population through their work.

These results are simply **beyond** exciting. They tell us that to make real, meaningful change in the lives of Canada's most vulnerable, **investments into education pay off handsomely**.

They also tell us something else – that investments into the education of Canada's Indigenous population **must continue to flow**.

Year after year, the gap between the amount so critically needed by Indigenous students and what we can provide continues to grow. In fact, the \$10 million awarded in 2013-2014 represents only 26% of the amount needed. In short, the need is much greater than what we can offer, and this means the money is not available anywhere else.

Before I go on, I would like to take a moment to thank the federal government for its support of the *Building Brighter Futures* program. As you may know, federal budget 2013 committed \$10 million to this program on the condition that we raise \$10 million. I am extremely proud to inform you that we have now raised more than \$6.2 million toward this campaign. So again, I thank the federal government for its support of Indspire and of Canada's Indigenous post-secondary students.

As I only have a limited amount of time, I will endeavor to answer the question of how the federal government can help Canada's most vulnerable with some closing remarks:

Education inspires; it liberates. Education changes lives, families, and communities.

More than anything however, education is a right that far too many Indigenous Canadians have not had the option to exercise.

I therefore call upon the federal government to continue investing in post-secondary education for our Indigenous people – First Nation, Inuit, and Métis.

What is required is a serious commitment of significant and sustained funds for post-secondary education and trades training for Indigenous Canadians. Only this kind of investment will bring the opportunity for our youth to create change in their lifetimes – change that will benefit all Canadians!

When these investments have been made, the results have followed, and they have simply been remarkable.

And finally, as you prepare the next federal budget, allow yourself to be bold.

Envision a Canada that includes the full and equal participation of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people in our workforce.

Put results first. Above all, avoid politics.

And finally, believe that this can be done. I know it can.

Nia:wen kowa for listening to my words. I look forward to any questions you may have.