



UAKN

Urban Aboriginal  
Knowledge Network

RCAU

Réseau de connaissances des  
Autochtones en milieu urbain

2015-2016

# SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

2015-16 Summary of Research

Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network  
(UAKN)

Research for a Better Life

March 2016

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# OVERVIEW

## OF THE URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) is a research network built on partnerships with urban Aboriginal communities, policy-makers, academics and student researchers engaging in community driven research aimed at fostering “mino-biimaadiziwin” – a phrase meaning the good life, in this context specifically for urban Aboriginal peoples. This goal is achieved through funding high-quality, policy-relevant research that brings together perspectives from academia, government and the urban Aboriginal community. This means UAKN research is driven by the community, for the community and all research being conducted benefits and gives back to the community.

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) co-led the creation of the UAKN in 2007. In 2012, the UAKN was awarded a 5-year, \$2.5 million partnership grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Through the work of over 80 formal partners and countless other supporters, 15 projects have already been completed and another 37 projects are underway.

Each of the research projects are community driven, ensuring the research is grounded in cultures, identities and values. Each of the completed projects are available at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org), along with a research brief to highlight key findings.

For more information on the UAKN projects visit, [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

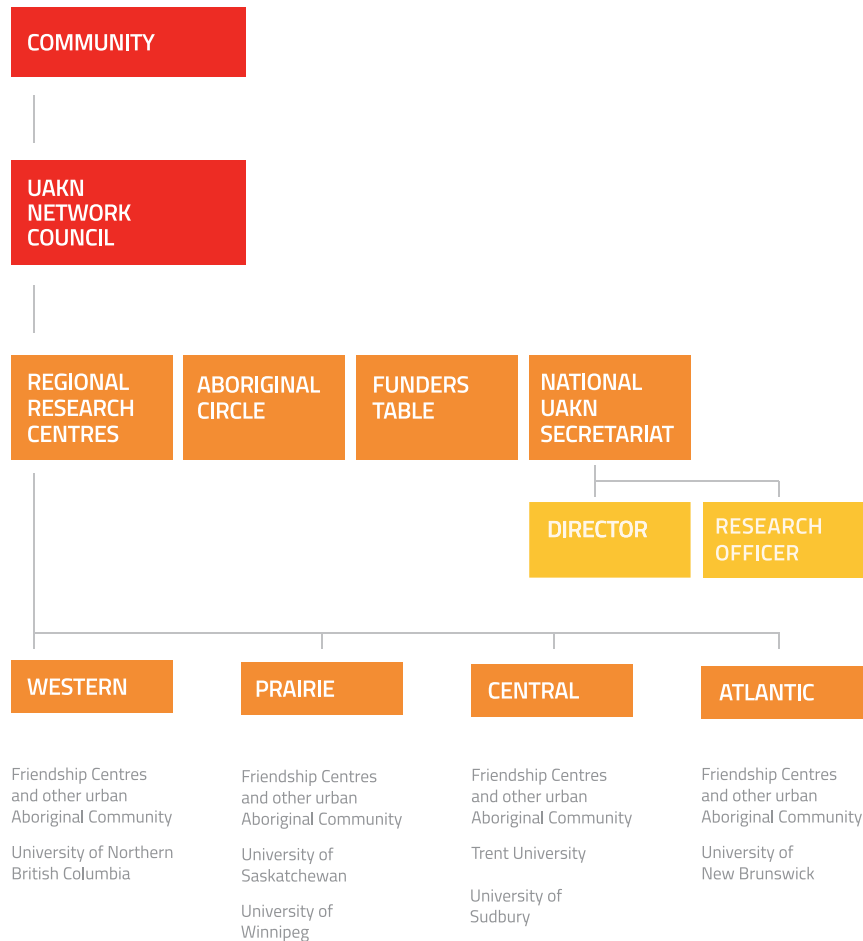


### The UAKN closing the knowledge gap

Learn more by watching this one-minute UAKN video and learn how we are closing the knowledge gap for Canada's urban Aboriginal population.

[youtube.com/watch?v=aVN30qiBEZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVN30qiBEZU)

# UAKN Secretariat Update



## The UAKN's Aboriginal Circle and Network Council

The UAKN Secretariat, at the National Association of Friendship Centres, provides administrative, governance and knowledge mobilization support to the network. The UAKN's innovative governance structure is reflective of community driven research principles and includes an Aboriginal Circle, comprised of urban Aboriginal community members and a Network Council, which is comprised of urban Aboriginal community members, academics and government partners.

The UAKN's Aboriginal Circle and Network Council meet face-to-face annually each fall. This year, as the UAKN enters its fourth year, issues around evaluation, national research needs and discussions about what the UAKN will leave behind for communities were key topics. The UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles have also been updated and refined, and can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# UAKN Regional Research Centres

Partnerships are the foundation of the network. The UAKN continues to foster partnerships among existing and new partners. There are currently over 80 formal partners. As the UAKN moves forward, we hope to see these partnerships continue to grow and broaden the UAKN's reach!

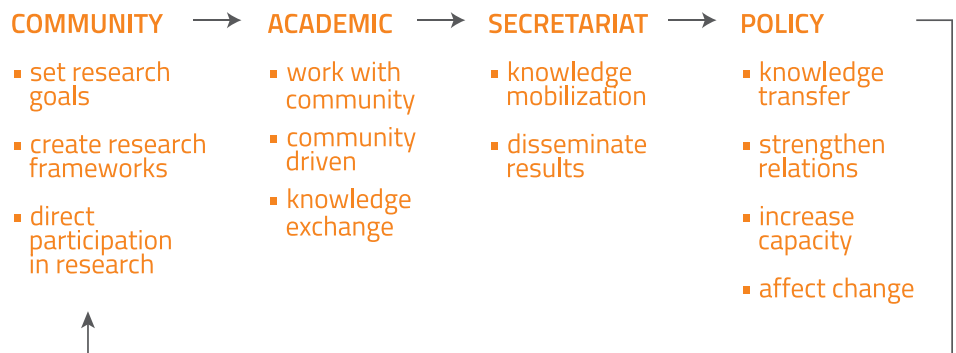
## KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

The UAKN and its partners are committed to continuing the mobilization of emerging knowledge from the 52 regional research projects taking place. The UAKN and its partners strive to ensure that the research produced through the UAKN is accessible to communities and its various stakeholders to expand impact. The UAKN transmits this knowledge through its website [uakn.org](http://uakn.org) and other social media tools.

Community-driven research facilitates knowledge mobilization at all stages through the research process. As a result of partnerships created through the research process, we expect positive impacts at the community, academic, policy and network levels. Innovative ways of mobilizing knowledge have been a key element of many research projects. This can be seen by the emergence of final projects including documentaries, videos, photo voice projects, museum exhibits, educational resource materials, curriculum development and interactive webinars as ways of highlighting key findings and policy recommendations for urban Aboriginal people.



The UAKN's Aboriginal Circle and Network Council



# Regional Research Centres



## A

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Western Research Centre,  
University of Northern British  
Columbia, Prince George, BC

## B

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Prairie Research Centre,  
University of Saskatchewan,  
Saskatoon, SK

## C

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Central Research Circle,  
Trent University,  
Peterborough, ON

## D

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UAKN Atlantic,  
University of New Brunswick,  
Fredericton, NB

# UAKN Regional Research Centres

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The UAKN research is funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Once received, the funds then flow through the four UAKN Regional Research Centres:

- Western Research Centre, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC
- Prairie Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK
- Central Research Circle, Trent University, Peterborough, ON
- UAKN Atlantic, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB

The Regional Research Centres connect community members, policymakers, regional universities and researchers from a cross-section of disciplines and stakeholders to engage in community driven research.

The UAKN remains committed to ensuring the training and engagement of new and emerging scholars, especially the inclusion and input of Aboriginal scholars. To date, over 100 graduate and undergraduate students have been involved in various capacities. The UAKN continues to support communities in building their own research capacity through this process. We look forward to documenting these diverse research

experiences emerging from the regions. As some research projects reach the completion stage, the UAKN is beginning to see some emerging themes, including:

- The use of story telling
- Innovations in dissemination
- Food security
- Homelessness
- Two-spirit identity
- Youth empowerment
- Economic development

Many of the UAKN findings and solutions are grounded in themes surrounding culture, resilience and reconciliation.



The UAKN projects are coming from strength-based approaches rooted in relationship building and partnerships. Many of the partnerships formed as a result of the research taking place have led to additional project funding and second phases! The UAKN research reveals that the urban Aboriginal experience can be quite different, and suggests innovative and creative ways to better serve and understand this population. Often success is measured through connections to history, culture and traditional knowledge and how these things alone can bring communities together to create social change.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY DRIVEN RESEARCH?

Community Driven Research is research that is grounded in community priorities, and constructed or designed collaboratively between communities and researchers. This means that research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's languages, cultural protocols, values, life cycles and gender(s); research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's research approaches and protocols and communities involved have ownership and control over the research taking place.

# WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE



**The UAKN Western Research Centre (RRC) is based out of the University of Northern British Columbia and is led by co-directors Dr. Ross Hoffman, First Nations Studies and Dr. Paul Bowles, Economics and International Studies. The Western RRC Executive committee is comprised of representatives from the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, the**

**Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, the BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, and Dr. Yale Belanger from the University of Lethbridge. There are currently 13 research projects funded in the Western Region with 3 final papers already submitted.**

# Giving Voice to Urban Aboriginal Families

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**Beverly Smith, D.Phil. (Oxon) Associate Director,  
Centre for Early Childhood Research and Policy,  
University of Victoria**

**Suzanne Jackson, Hulitan Family  
Services Society and Aboriginal  
Engagement Initiative**

This research project will give a voice to urban Aboriginal families and caregivers on what they believe is important to the well-being of their young children. The goal of this project is to better understand the strengths, needs and barriers of raising young children in urban Aboriginal families. Experiences in early childhood are fundamental determinants of lifelong well-being. A methodology adopted from social psychology, called 'echo', enables the values and beliefs of the population of interest to be articulated. The population of interest are individuals working with, or raising, young urban Aboriginal children (ages 0-6 years) in the Greater Victoria Capital Region. The outcome

is a unique and important perspective to inform early childhood services and practice.

This research will allow for those working with, or raising, young urban Aboriginal children to define a conceptual framework of early childhood development (ECD), thereby providing a unique perspective on ECD. Conducting this research conveys respect to the individuals most directly involved with young children, facilitates engagement and networking, raises the profile of early childhood development and assists service providers and policymakers in making effective public policy and resource allocation.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Truth in Indigenous Ways of Knowing

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**Dr. Ralph Bodor of the Faculty of Social Work,  
University of Calgary (Edmonton Division)**

**Blue Quills First Nations College**

**Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society**

**Mahegun Trails Inc.**

**The Alberta Association of Services  
for Children and Families (AASCF)**

This research project builds upon research recently conducted in partnership with FCSS Calgary that concluded with the creation of a set of Indigenous Program Indicators. This project created thirteen indicators in five areas (Indigenous Identity, Social Inclusion, Trauma and Healing, Traditional Parenting and Ceremony) that are now being used by funded FCSS programs to support continued program

funding. A challenge in the western region to the Indigenous Program Indicators (IPI) questions is their reliability and validity from a western perspective.

This research expands on the previous work and will support the process of evaluating Indigenous programs from an Indigenous perspective allowing Indigenous programs to maintain funding using appropriate and culturally substantiated outcome indicators.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

Research in progress.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Transforming Education

CREATIVE EFFECTIVE, HIGH QUALITY TRANSITION EXPERIENCES  
FOR YOUNG ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

**Danielle Alphonse, BC Regional Innovation Chair  
for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development  
& Early Childhood Education & Care Teaching  
Faculty at Vancouver Island University**

**Linda McDonell (Adjunct Faculty,  
Vancouver Island University)**

**Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship  
Centre (TLAFC)**

**BC Regional Innovation Chair (BCRIC)  
for Aboriginal Early Childhood  
Development (AECD)**

**School District 68**

This research project highlights what community driven partnerships are all about. Vancouver Island University (VIU) has established a clear mandate to work in partnership with the First Nations communities and Aboriginal agencies in the region to improve educational opportunities for Aboriginal people and undertake various collaborative educational and research initiatives. Since 1983, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (TLAFC) and VIU have had long standing partnership arrangements. TLAFC and the BC Regional Innovation Chair (BCRIC) for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) have worked together since March 2010 to undertake a collaborative action-research initiative that includes the design, development, implementation, research and evaluation of a TLAFC AECD program, Qeq (Baby) College.

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) funded one of the projects that has contributed to the Qeq College AECD program, "Kindergarten Transitions II: A Scan of Existing Supportive Programs for Aboriginal Children and Families in BC" (2013). This current project now builds from the Kindergarten Transitions II project with the following research goals:

- Culturally and community appropriate and validated program evaluation strategies and tools for the Qeq College Transitions programs.
- Strengthened community relationships and AECD networks across the academic and First Nations/Aboriginal communities.
- Strengthened First Nations/Aboriginal student research capacity (including both undergraduate & graduate) in the area of Aboriginal Early Childhood Development research and community development.
- Increased opportunities for Elders and other First Nations/Aboriginal agencies to work with VIU faculty in areas critical to local First Nations communities.
- Strengthened opportunities for VIU's BCRIC for AECD and TLAFC to network and share with VIU faculty,

other post secondary institutions in BC (and elsewhere) and First Nations communities and Aboriginal organizations regarding project learnings, research outcomes, community development and culturally appropriate assessment and evaluation templates for use by a variety of constituent groups.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. Additional funds have been secured to extend this project to include more interviews and mobilize the findings through the creation of a video.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Kindergarten Transitions II

A SCAN OF EXISTING SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS FOR  
ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wendy Beaton and Linda McDonell,  
Vancouver Island University

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre

The *Kindergarten Transitions II* project aims to expand the knowledge of existing programs in British Columbia that are supporting early childhood transitions.

## MAIN FINDINGS

This study determined some key elements of successful working partnerships between childhood settings and kindergarten and primary schools. It was established that in order to ensure successful transitions between early childhood settings and kindergarten for Aboriginal students, the following considerations are paramount:

- Relationship building and strengthening communication across all stakeholders including families, educators, teachers, administrators and other professional and support agencies at all stages of program/classroom planning, development and implementation.
- Family-centered approaches in all aspects of programs including: outreach, planning, program delivery and assessment/evaluation.

- Culturally inclusive approaches in all aspects of programs – these approaches must include locally relevant language, culture and traditional knowledge and practices.
- Play-based learning experiences to form a strong foundation for holistic child development.
- Collaborative professional development opportunities for ECE's and teachers.
- Formalizing the above 'learnings' in program/school policy.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to further develop Tillicum Lelum's Aboriginal Early Childhood Development program, the following have to be implemented:

- Creating and implementing reciprocal policy between the early childhood and school programs.
- Formal documentation of the strengths and challenges of transition services and supports could strengthen the quality of existing services.

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS

An outcome of this project has been the delivery of a summer pre-kindergarten pilot project funded by the School District, Tillicum Lelum and the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. A second project was funded in July 2015.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

### UAKN WEBINAR

Aboriginal Early Childhood Transitions was held for this project March 2015, recording available online:

[uakn.org/webinar-aboriginal-early-childhood-transitions/](http://uakn.org/webinar-aboriginal-early-childhood-transitions/)

# Pathways to Restorative Child Welfare Practices

## DECISION-MAKING AT VACFSS

**Shelley Johnson (Saulteaux) Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, School of Social Work**

**Bernadette Spence (Cree) Executive Director, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society**

The Restorative Child Welfare Practices research project is conceptualized by the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society's (VACFSS) leadership team. Located in Vancouver, VACFSS is the largest urban Aboriginal delegated child welfare agency in BC. In 2014, the VACFSS ED approached UBC professor Shelly Johnson to co-develop the proposed research project.

The research goal of this project is to identify the pathways of decision-making and practice within child protection.

This project will aim to generate restorative outcomes for the unique aggregate of children and families served by VACFSS and to directly contribute to the development of restorative policy, practice and decision-making at VACFSS. Anticipated findings from this project will also be directly applicable to the work of other delegated Aboriginal agencies in British Columbia, across Canada, and to Indigenous peoples working in the context of child welfare internationally.

### CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## VACFSS ED BERNADETTE SPENCE

“VACFSS restorative policies and practices ensure child safety and stronger family functioning; however, the result is not consistent. We want to review and document VACFSS practices that result in better outcomes such as family engagement that prevents children from coming into care, child placements with relatives, reunification with families and enhanced family functioning upon completion of services. We have undertaken a previous study that documented least intrusive pathways in the legislation and we would like to build on our past research findings to formalize our practice pathways, in policy and realign our service delivery frameworks.”

# Transforming Education

## STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OF URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH

**Dr. Leslie Brown, University of Victoria**

**Dr. Shelly Johnson, University of British Columbia**

**Holly Anderson, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services**

**Barb Cowan, Surrounded By Cedar Child and Family Services**

**Gary Mavis, Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents**

**Joycelyn Helland, Broadway Youth Resource Centre**

Urban Aboriginal youth, particularly those living in Canada's foster care systems, have unique educational needs. Graduation levels are much lower in comparison to both Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal students not in foster care. Those in foster care tend to experience much greater disruption in their educational experiences. This research project seeks to engage with Aboriginal youth groups to better understand their educational struggles, successes and needs.

Urban Aboriginal youth representing four Aboriginal youth groups living in larger metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Victoria, BC, were asked to creatively respond to the question, "Who or what could make you want to stay in school?"

The four youth groups are asked to create a video, poster, art project, theatrical performance or song to address the research question. Their responses were videotaped at a one-day provincial youth education conference on October 18, 2013 at the University of British Columbia, which can be viewed here:

[youtube.com/watch?v=KUeDDdvlhj8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUeDDdvlhj8).

### CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, final paper in process. The Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services and Dr. Johnson of UBC have continued this research partnership with a project focusing on Pathways to Restorative Child Welfare Practices: Decision Making at VACFSS.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# Exploring the Process and Outcomes of Partnering with Urban Aboriginal Partners to Promote Physical Activity for Young Children

Dr. Beverly Smith, Centre for Early Childhood Research and Policy, University of Victoria

Leslie Brown, Institute for University-Community Engagement

PJ Naylor, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education

Mona Carlson, FASD Key Worker, Island Métis Family & Community Services Society

This research project collaborated with urban Aboriginal organizations and urban Aboriginal individuals working in the local school districts. A community-based, participatory action research method was used to explore the process and outcomes of developing and implementing culturally sensitive physical activity resources for young urban Aboriginal children (ages 3-8).

This project used data displays to display key findings and themes. Two resources were created out of this project in partnership with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre who developed a resource based on an animal theme, titled *Let's Move with the Bear & His Friends*, building on previous cultural language and literacy booklets. The Island Métis Family & Community Services Society developed a resource based on the iconic Métis Red River Cart story.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Physical activity helps develop habits that track into later childhood, adolescence and adulthood and helps prevent many chronic health issues.
- Culturally appropriate resources that were created met a strong need that was brought forth from the urban Aboriginal communities.
- The collaborative process in this study had an emotional impact on the participants; location was also an important factor in adding strength and meaning to the process.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research project is complete; visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org) for the final paper and research brief. The success of this project has led to the Island Metis Community and Family Services funding the development of 500 copies of the "Journey of the Metis Red River Cart", book and resource kits and have now funded numerous training events on the use of the resource. Through the strengthened relationships with the community, the Centre has embarked on other large Aboriginal early childhood research programs.

### UAKN WEBINAR SERIES

Working From the Heart held February 2016 and is now available online:

[youtube.com/watch?v=6Y27VCr-cwl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y27VCr-cwl)



Partnerships such as these highlight the unique and collaborative approach to community-based research. The creation and implementation of culturally relevant resources that communities can work with are instrumental in building valuable relationships and ensuring that the needs of communities are being met through research.



**Figure 1** – Data display of basic concepts or codes. The larger words have larger counts. Time (the lack of it and the ability to work with different groups and people's schedules, concepts of time and pacing) was the factor that came up the most often. The participants experienced the process as creative, rooted (in culture context and existing practices) supported and relational. Ownership of the resources and the many plans for implementation situates the process and outcomes within the communities. Expertise refers to the communities, the universities, the knowledge keepers and Elders.

# UAKN Prince George Protocol Development Proposal

Dr. Michael John Evans, Professor, University of British Columbia, Community Culture and Global Studies

Barb Ward-Burkitt, Executive Director Prince George Native Friendship Centre

Central Interior Native Health Society and Positive Living North

This research project is an outcome of the ongoing dialogue with and between urban Aboriginal organizations in Prince George and university-based researchers from UNBC and UBC, surrounding the research goals and capacity needs in the urban Aboriginal community generally. A clear need arose to delineate both processes and protocols that will assist urban Aboriginal organizations in Prince George to develop research projects and respond to research opportunities.

This project seeks to address research deficits and knowledge disparities related to urban Aboriginal research. It also attempts to develop the research capacity of urban Aboriginal organizations and researchers to undertake research that situates research projects within the epistemological and relational realities of urban Aboriginal communities. This will ensure that the knowledge is translated and shared in ways that people can understand and implement.

## KEY FINDINGS

Urban Aboriginal organizations in Prince George want to be involved in research:

- Developing research protocols for organizations is a key strategy to move vision into practice.
- Each organization is unique in terms of research vision and capacity to engage in research partnerships.
- Despite organizational diversity, the organizations share similar values about research.
- Capacity development is critical to ensure fair and equitable research partnerships - and the capacity development should be ongoing
- Working together as a community, we learned from each other's viewpoints and practice.

*Urban Aboriginal people have a unique vision and voice when it comes to research - and this voice is often ignored in research partnerships that focus on First Nations.*

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Urban Aboriginal people are uniquely positioned to engage in and drive important research.

- Urban Aboriginal people want more control as research partners. For example, they wish to ensure that research results in direct benefits to community members.
- Urban Aboriginal people require capacity development and ongoing resources to engage in equitable research relationships.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, and the final paper is forthcoming.

Resources developed titled, *Central Interior Native Health Society Research Protocols; Positive Living North Research Protocols; Prince George Native Friendship Centre Research Protocols and Urban Aboriginal Research Protocols Template*. Pilot testing the protocols is now underway with an accompanying research project.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Does Subsidized Housing Aid Aboriginal Transition Into the Urban Environment?

A FRONT-LINE SERVICE-DELIVERY PERSPECTIVE FROM LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

**Dr. Yale D. Belanger, Professor Native American Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge**

**Rosie Many Grey Horses, Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority**

In 2012, Treaty 7 Urban Aboriginal Housing Authority (hereinafter Treaty 7 Housing), of Lethbridge, Alberta, initiated a home buyers' education project to advance its clients' knowledge of the home buying process. During this project, Treaty 7 Housing identified several internal limitations in its client

intake policy, its recruitment strategies, its post-intake oversight, and in preparing clients to secure non-Treaty 7 Housing accommodations in a timely fashion.

This research projects seeks to identify the challenges confronting its clients upon moving into the city; what do the clients hope to achieve with Treaty 7 Housing and why do current clients express apprehension about leaving Treaty 7 Housing?

This project also aims to empower local urban Aboriginal people by engaging them in research that will help improve the relationship between government services and urban Aboriginal families.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Melq'ilwiye

INTERSECTIONS OF IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND HEALTH  
AMONG URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH

**Dr. Natalie Clark, University of British Columbia**

**Dr. Patrick Walton, University of British Columbia**

**Interior Indian Friendship Centre  
Thompson Rivers University**

Melq'ilwiye is a Secwepemc word that means, coming together. This research takes place on the traditional territories of the Secwepemc peoples in the city of Kamloops. The research project has been developed through

ongoing dialogue between community and academic researchers with the goals being:

- To advance the understanding of how urban Aboriginal youth identify as homeless or at risk of homelessness to identify their health needs within an Indigenous intersectional model of health and wellness.
- To contribute to new understandings and knowledge of Indigenous urban youth and research capacity among urban Aboriginal youth and urban Aboriginal health care providers.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Aboriginal Youth-Powered Documentaries on Pathways Into and Out of Homelessness Following Southern Alberta's 2013 Flood

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Rita Isabel Henderson, PhD, Department of Community Health Sciences Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary

Daniela Navia, Department of Anthropology Faculty of Arts, University of Calgary

LeeAnne Ireland, Executive Director, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

This research project seeks to understand pathways into and out of homelessness among Aboriginal youth in diverse conditions of housing insecurity in Southern Alberta. This research project will engage homelessness Aboriginal youth to participate in documentary film-

making workshops as co-researchers encouraged to overcome barriers through guidance from their communities.

The outcome of this project will be four short films on housing insecurity experienced by Aboriginal youth.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Review of the Literature and an Environmental Scan of Urban Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Initiatives in Canada

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Dr. Ross Hoffman, University of Northern  
British Columbia

Jessie King, PhD Candidate

This research project is comprised of a literature review and environmental scan to examine the nature and scope of the research that is focused on the topic of healing initiatives for Aboriginal peoples that have and are presently taking place within an urban context. This project seeks to identify the actual Aboriginal healing programming that presently exists with urban Aboriginal organizations in Canada.

Preliminary finding revealed some primary themes:

- Traditional healing and western health care are, for the most part, complementary.
- The best practices for healing are holistic in nature.
- Services need to be welcoming, inclusive and culturally based.
- Aboriginal populations found in urban centers are culturally diverse, creating a challenge.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Precarious Banking in Prince George Urban Aboriginal Individuals' Financial Behavior and Experiences

SOME FOCUS GROUP EVIDENCE

**Dr. Paul Bowles, University of Northern British Columbia in collaboration with the Aboriginal Business and Community Development Centre (ABDC)**

The purpose of this study was to understand the financial barriers faced by urban Aboriginal people and their use of urban financial institutions including banks, credit unions, and payday lenders. This research will further inform public policy on how best to meet the financial service needs of urban Aboriginal people.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Aboriginal people have been identified as a priority group by federal policy initiatives designed to address financial literacy. Specific concern relates to the use of fringe financial institutions (FFIs).
- This study revealed that financial literacy levels among Aboriginal people were higher than anticipated and the use of FFIs were lower than previously thought, although not uncommon.

- FFIs were used primarily as a last resort or due to bank policies being in conflict with the participant's work/life circumstances. FFIs were used for convenience and their policies on personal identification as opposed to being used because the participants lacked financial literacy.
- Research identified the need for 'financial literacy plus' programs for Aboriginal people and the need to raise income levels and have employers pay a living wage for waged employment.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome the use of FFIs by Aboriginal people and increase the level of financial literacy in Aboriginal communities the following policy recommendations were given:

- The federal government needs to focus on policies that promote 'financial literacy plus' programs. These programs would provide an opportunity for participants

to raise their income levels and creditworthiness through programs such as matched-savings programs and emergency loan facilities.

- Emphasis should be placed on policies to raise income levels among low-income earners. Many participants stated that even with budgeting their low incomes were the main reason they used FFIs.
- Banks should adapt and adopt longer opening hours, as the research showed that many low-income customers lack the access to a computer and thus online banking is not an option for them.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. Final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE



**The Prairie Regional Research Centre (RRC) is based out of the University of Saskatchewan, led by Director, Dr. Ryan Walker, Department of Geography and Planning and Associate Director, Dr. Jaime Cidro, University of Winnipeg, Department of Anthropology. The Prairie RRC executive committee is comprised of representatives from Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan,**

**Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in the Province of Manitoba, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Saskatchewan Region and Dr. Bettina Schneider, First Nations University of Canada. There are currently 15 research projects funded in the Prairie Region with 7 final papers submitted and counting!**

# A scoping study of two-spirit people, homelessness and access to services in urban centres in Saskatchewan and beyond

Dr. Alex Wilson, Associate Professor,  
Educational Foundations University  
of Saskatchewan

Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.

Out Saskatoon

Prince Albert Q-Network

TransSask Support Services, Inc.

Research reveals that the population of homeless Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is growing. There is a knowledge gap and lack of research on Aboriginal two-spirit peoples – a demographic that community organizations have reported has been largely ignored in homelessness research. The homeless population faces a number of different challenges and barriers when accessing housing services than non-Aboriginal, heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. Further, systemic barriers like racism, homophobia and transphobia that exist within institutions that provide housing services may lead to re-victimization of Indigenous two-spirit people, placing this group at high risk.

This research projects seeks to examine how homelessness impacts two-spirit/queer Aboriginal people in urban centres in Saskatchewan. And, how can service providers and educators improve access to homeless two-spirit/queer Aboriginal people?

The final report for this project will take the form of a written document and educational materials which will include a one-pager for service providers, a briefing memo for policymakers, a community press release and a template for community presentations on this topic.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# A narrative inquiry into the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families outside of school places

Dr. Sean Lessard, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Education and Core Studies at the University of Regina's Faculty of Education  
File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council,  
North Central Family Services  
FSIN  
Regina Public Schools  
Sask Sport  
City of Regina  
Elders Commission  
Growing Young Movers Youth Development Inc.  
University of Regina, Faculty of Education

More than half of the Canadian Aboriginal population is under the age of 25, which places an urgent need to collaboratively inquire into the lives of Aboriginal youth in current school contexts.

This research project aims to explore Aboriginal youths' and their families' experiences of education, including their schooling experiences within provincially funded urban schools and as they move between home, community and school. This project examines the research question: How may the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families

outside of school places inform the practices and pedagogy within school places? The priorities of this project are to engage in research conversations with participants, write thematic narrative accounts with experiences that resonate and share the policy implications of youth and family experiences with stakeholders.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Increased participation rates in school as a result of participation within the program of research, as noted by administrators and youth participants. Growing participation rate of youth gathering to share experiences. It is here where we can gain understanding of the complexity of the lives of Aboriginal youth and the transactional nature of the lived experience, which deconstruct previous narratives of deficit, poverty and inner city life of urban Aboriginal youth. Data in this study reveal the importance in using educational experiences to inform policy within school settings.

The program currently employs three urban Aboriginal high school youth in paid mentorship opportunities. The program funds one graduate student and three undergraduate students. Youth are engaged in a variety of wellness activities as they continue the process of building relationships with the community.

A website has been developed, with a program blog to engage with youth, families and community members. Please see the following link: [growingyoungmovers.com/programs/gym-after-school-club](http://growingyoungmovers.com/programs/gym-after-school-club).

## CURRENT STATUS

Research is in progress, currently in the stages of data collection. Results of research will be disseminated in three scholarly articles, one published book and a final paper.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PROJECT

Community engagement uptake for this project has been outstanding! There are 4 graduate students, 7 undergraduate students, 6 urban

Aboriginal high school youth mentor participants, 3 Elders from Treaty 4 Territory, 5 teachers and 4 parents engaged in this research directly.

# Traditional Food Upskilling as a Pathway to Urban Indigenous Food Sovereignty

DEFINING FOOD SECURITY FOR URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Dr. Jaime Cidro, Department of Anthropology,  
University of Winnipeg

Dr. Evelyn Peters, Urban and Inner City Studies,  
University of Winnipeg

Jim Sinclair, Executive Director, Indian and  
Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg

While food security is an urgent social, economic, cultural and health issue for Aboriginal people in urban areas, this research study revealed that there are some unique elements of food security to be examined related to cultural values for those living in the inner city areas.

## KEY FINDINGS

- While food security is an urgent social, economic, cultural, and health issue for Aboriginal people in urban areas, and particularly those living in inner city areas, there are unique elements of food security related to cultural values to be considered.
- This study revealed impacts of colonialism on Indigenous food systems and gaps in the literature and research that remain when looking at urban Aboriginal populations that migrate from the remote and rural communities.
- Food, culture and health are all linked - research findings have indicated that while food insecurity does exist for urban Aboriginal people, there is an important connection between food and social well-being.

- The three key areas identified by participants as being pertinent to Indigenous food security in Winnipeg include: 1) Growing, harvesting, preparing and eating cultural food as ceremony, 2) Cultural food as a part of the connection to the land through reciprocity and 3) Re-learning Indigenous Food Security practices to address food insecurity.
- Research identified the need for urban organizations to work with the community to participate in “upskilling” around cultural food, to build capacity on improving access and knowledge to traditional foods.

There are a few opportunities to further contribute to policy in this area. One way would be to provide a larger context for urban organizations, specifically Aboriginal organizations that focus on food security, to better understand how to develop programs and policies which support traditional and culturally based food production and food preparation.

The following policy recommendations were brought forth:

- Begin a dialogue at the local level for understanding not only how to access cultural food, but how to authentically engage in Indigenous Food Security through a knowledge and awareness of food preparation.
- The knowledge and understanding associated with growing and

nurturing your own food is connected to a larger understanding of the relationship between the environment, spirituality and people.

- Obtaining access to traditional food in the city is different than for people living in rural and reserve communities and needs to be addressed as such.
- Access to cultural food in the city is about alleviating food insecurity, but also about a larger reclamation and connection to food and food production
- Make recommendations concerning food systems policy in order to meet the needs for culturally valued foods for urban Aboriginal households.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete, final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



Jesse Vanderbilt



Jesse Vanderbilt



The success of this project has now led into a second phase. The research question for this second phase is to explore the ways in which urban organizations can “upskill” Indigenous food practices such as food growing, harvesting and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) within an urban context. This research will explore the operationalization of IFS principles by

undertaking a series of traditional food preparation, cultivation and procurement workshops followed by focus groups to talk about IFS principles within an urban context. This project will seek to expand its network of partners, develop curriculum and to continue to make policy recommendations that can be used at a regional level.

# Food is our language – Reconnecting Youth to Culture through Indigenous Food Sovereignty

AN EXPLORATION INTO THE ROLE OF YOUTH ENGAGING IN TRADITIONAL FOOD AND CULTURAL SKILLS IMPACTS CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SELF-ESTEEM

Dr. Jaime Cidro, (Department of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg)

Tabitha Martens, Graduate student (Department of Environment and Geography, University of Manitoba)

North End Community Renewal Corporation

North End Food Security Network

Indian and Metis Friendship Centre

## KEY FINDINGS

- Indigenous people living in urban centres face a wide range of food security issues from limited access to healthy and affordable foods, including limited access to cultural food.
  - This study examines the ways in which urban organizations can 'upskill' Indigenous food practices such as growing, harvesting and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty within an urban context.
  - More than just simple access to food is needed. This research demonstrated that traditional or cultural food "upskilling" is central to operationalization of IFS principles, and in an urban context, creativity is required to adapt these food skills.
  - There were four key findings that emerged from the research: 1) Food as a part of reclaiming identity; 2) Food memory; 3) Practicing culture in the city; and 4) Food as relationship building.
  - Urban Indigenous organizations who are seeking ways of weaving culture into programs and services may consider traditional food upskilling as one important mechanism that will result in a range of social, cultural and economic benefits.
- The study builds on the concept of food security in an urban Aboriginal context and discusses how Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) can be used to give urban Aboriginal populations control over their food production and consumption. Food sovereignty can be defined as the increased control over food systems and this concept has emerged as a means of addressing food insecurity. Food sovereignty places control over how, what, and when food is eaten with people and encourages a close relationship between production and consumption. IFS is an important tool to combat food insecurity, especially in urban centers as inner cities are known for having food deserts, and

access to cultural foods is often limited to trade networks and a small number of market providers. The goal of the study was to provide insights into how urban organizations that focus on food security can better develop programs and policies to support traditional and culturally-based food production and preparation. IFS is guided by four main principles; the recognition that food is sacred; participation in food systems; self-determination; and supportive legislation and policy. These principles also recognize that food has an historical element for Indigenous people.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Indigenous organizations, especially those who serve urban Indigenous populations, should consider incorporating traditional food skills into their skill building programming as a way to enhance self-esteem building, as it relates to cultural knowledge and development. Food practices such as growing, harvesting, and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty within an urban context can have a positive impact in addressing the issue of food insecurity.
- In order for urban IFS to be fully operational, a re-building of urban Indigenous food must take place. Winnipeg's Neechi Commons is a great example of how the community has addressed the needs for market foods as well as cultural foods.

### CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete, final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## FOOD IS OUR LANGUAGE BUILDS FROM DEFINING FOOD SECURITY

The success of this project has now led into a second phase. The research question for this second phase is to explore the ways in which urban organizations can "upskill" Indigenous food practices such as food growing, harvesting and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) within an urban context.

# The impact of Indigenous Knowledge in science education on urban Aboriginal students' engagement and attitudes toward science

A PILOT STUDY

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**Professor Jeff Baker, Department of Educational Administration University of Saskatchewan and the Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.**

**Whitecap Dakota First Nation  
Saskatoon Public Schools**

This research project will engage science teachers and community Elders and/or knowledge keepers in developing and delivering a science unit respectfully, including Indigenous content and pedagogies, and will examine the impact of the delivery of this unit on urban Aboriginal students' engagement and attitudes toward science.

Formal science education has failed to meet the needs of most Indigenous learners. Hence, few Indigenous peoples pursue post-secondary programs or

careers in science, grossly diminishing our capacity for economic development and our ability to make informed decisions related to health, resource management and education—thus limiting opportunities to contribute to the broader socio-economic health of Saskatchewan and Canada. The research will foster cross-cultural understandings and acknowledge the value of Indigenous knowledge (IK) for scientific endeavors in natural resource management, ecology and further science-related areas. While IK has recently been introduced in curricula across all subjects and grade levels in Saskatchewan, many teachers have little knowledge of how to meet these expectations. In response, Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS) has introduced

professional development programming for science teachers, engaging them in experiential learning with First Nations and Métis Elders and knowledge keepers. This proposed pilot research project is a logical and necessary next step in supporting these teachers to apply what they have learned with their students.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

Research in progress.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Exploring Culturally Responsive School Governance for Aboriginal Students Success in Saskatoon

Dr. Michael Cottrell, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon Tribal Council

This research project is intended to advance community-identified educational, organizational and governance needs and aspirations of the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). Saskatoon is currently home to the largest number of STC off-reserve members, including approximately 1,000 school-age children who constitute the fastest-growing demographic within the city's schools. Despite some progress, these and other Aboriginal children still benefit the least from publicly funded education as provided by the city's two school divisions (Merasty et al, 2013). Given the close relationship between educational attainment and other measures of well-being, achieving more equitable educational outcomes for STC learners attending Saskatoon schools is currently one of the most compelling concerns of STC leadership and parents.

The goal of this research is to identify mutually desirable, culturally-responsive innovations in educational governance and administration in Saskatoon. The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What governance structures are currently in place at the school and divisional levels in Saskatoon?
2. In your opinion, how do these arrangements impact STC parental involvement and student achievement within Saskatoon schools?
3. What legislation, policy, structures or mechanisms do you deem necessary and appropriate to operationalize STC educational jurisdiction in the Saskatoon context?
4. How might Indigenous consensual decision-making processes and principles be synthesized with Western organizational theory to forge mutually desirable, culturally responsive innovations

in educational governance and administration in Saskatoon?

5. How might these governance mechanisms be utilized to advance more equitable educational outcomes for STC and other Aboriginal students in Saskatoon schools?

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Youth Homelessness

INCLUDING THE VOICES OF YOUTH WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

**Dr. Marleny M. Bonnycastle, University of Manitoba**

**Dr. Maureen Simpkins, University College of the North**

**Boys and Girls Club of Thompson**

**Keewatin Tribal Council, Youth Wellness and Education**

**Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre**

**MacDonald Youth Services**

**Northern Health Region – Aboriginal Health Services**

**Pride North of 55**

**R.D Parker High School Youth**

**Aboriginal Council Thompson Youth Build**

Much attention has been directed toward the issue of homelessness in northern Manitoba. As a result, several new transitional facilities have opened their doors in 2014. Recent studies suggest that the youth homeless population often remains invisible to the general population and to policymakers because they tend to move from apartment to apartment, couch surfing, and they tend to keep to themselves.

There are currently few options for youth to find a safe and comfortable place to live. Rents are high in Thompson and apartments are difficult to rent, especially for Aboriginal youth.

This is an 18-month research project funded by the UAKN, the Manitoba Research Alliance and the University College of the North. This research project was developed from the knowledge gained from working with community partners for the past several years. Our intent is to conduct research that will create the space to collaboratively and respectfully work with youth so their knowledge and life experience can be heard and taken into account by service providers and policymakers as well as the broader Thompson community. The goal of this project is to create and contribute to solutions for youth homelessness that will be beneficial not only for youth, but for northern Manitoba.

To develop a community-engaged qualitative and participatory action research project with homeless or at risk youth along with local organizations:

- To use participatory research methodologies to gather data in order to understand and identify the factors that put youth at risk of homelessness in Thompson.
- To conduct a needs assessment to identify the needs, supports, current services, and gaps for youth at risk in Thompson.
- To develop a collaborative community action plan based on the findings of the three research questions.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## EXAMPLES OF A COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROCESS

There are approximately 15 northern organizations partnering on this project. A highlight for this project was the Community Café event held with over forty people in attendance made up of youth, service providers and students. This knowledge exchange event gave direction of the future data collection in this project and beyond!



# From Embers to Flame

IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES OF RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH  
AMONG INNER-CITY ABORIGINAL YOUTH

Andrew R. Hatala, PhD, University of  
Saskatchewan, Department of Community  
Health and Epidemiology

Sylvia Abonyi, PhD, University of Saskatchewan  
Youth Research Assistants from University of  
Saskatchewan: Kelly Bird-Naytowhow, Tamara  
Pearl, Tyson Brittan

Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC)

White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL)

Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan  
Inc. (MACSI)

Core Youth Neighbourhood Co-op (CYNC) and  
Pleasant Hill Community Association (PHCA).

This research project highlights the resources, knowledge, and capabilities required to address the inequalities in mental illness and addictions among Aboriginal youth that are already present within inner-city contexts and young people themselves. *Hidden resources of resilience represent small embers that can, through the intervention of informed strategies, be fanned into flames.*

An arts-based photo-voice project that involved 32 Aboriginal youth from inner-city contexts was developed. In invited them to take photos of aspects of their lives and community that provide or foster strength and resilience. Over 1,000 images were collected surrounding the theme of resilience. An art gallery exhibit in Saskatoon, called “The Four Seasons of Resilience”, was created to display the artistic works of the Aboriginal youth to share with the wider community.

These stories can assist other youth in the community who show lower degrees of resilience. The results of this research will identify sources of resilience and positive mental health strategies that can inform early intervention theory and policy to promote the mental and community health and wellness of Aboriginal youth in Saskatoon and other Canadian urban contexts.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Youth programs that support youth resilience, culture and well-being are a key to healthy living for Indigenous youth in Canada. Lives of Indigenous youth are strongly impacted by historical processes of colonization. Despite this history, connections to culture and spirituality are central to youth resilience and well-being. This research revealed that close connections and older youth mentorship are key when identifying strategies of resilience and mental health among inner-city Aboriginal youth. Final paper and journal article are in process and will be released with key findings.

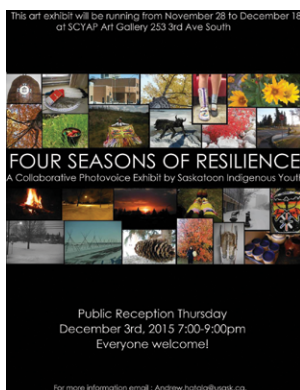
## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.

More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

View video of the exhibit here:

[youtube.com/watch?v=zIQAkhtV8u8](https://youtube.com/watch?v=zIQAkhtV8u8)



“Doing a photo voice project once per season over an entire year was a new aspect of our project that emerged from our community partnerships. Regular meetings and connections with community partners was central.”

# A Critical Examination of Household Food Practices in Saskatoon's Inner City

Rachel Engler-Stringer, Associate Professor,  
Community Health and Epidemiology,  
University of Saskatchewan  
Northern Saskatchewan Trappers'  
Association Cooperative  
Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre  
CHEP Good Food Inc.  
Station 20 West  
Friendship Inn

This research project examines how urban areas have become a focus for the development of alternative food networks. An alternative food network (AFN) is a broad term that encompasses networks of producers, consumers and other actors. They are alternatives to the standard industrial food supply, typically accessed through conventional

grocery stores, which we assume are the dominant means of food procurement by the vast majority of urban people. AFN producers include, for example, farmers, hunters and gatherers. AFN 'other actors' include, amongst others, community-based food interventions, which are food procurement and healthy eating initiatives offered by a non-profit/charitable or health organization. While some community-based food interventions (such as Good Food Box or Fruit and Vegetable Market programs) target under-served groups, AFNs have been criticized as marginalizing people of lower socioeconomic status. Therefore, the extent to which the urban poor are marginalized from or are in fact participating in emerging alternative

networks is unclear because AFNs in urban areas have been under-studied. This research aims to study the food practices of urban Aboriginal households, as it examines how AFNs can contribute to cultural resilience and resistance and the improved well-being of individuals and households within the context of daily life. The results of this study will include an in-depth qualitative data using interviews, observation and photography.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
More information on this project can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

A welcome event was held where all participants were invited to have dinner with the researchers and partners on this project. This was a very successful event and the sharing that took place will ensure that the data collected will be very rich.

# Defining and Responding to Aboriginal Homelessness in Flin Flon

Evelyn Peters, Urban and Inner City Studies,  
University of Winnipeg

Shelly Craig, Executive Director,  
Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre

The research revealed that a number of organizations in Flin Flon that provide services to homeless individuals such as service use, especially for medical services, appears relatively high, and it may be that the provision of supportive housing would reduce these costs. Flin Flon's Aboriginal homeless people represent a high needs population with high levels of unemployment, welfare dependence, trauma and health needs.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Based on the data collected, it appears that the proportion of Flin Flon's population that is Aboriginal and homeless is higher than homeless statistics in Canada overall.

- Flin Flon's Aboriginal homeless population represents 1.7% of Flin Flon's total population (including the Saskatchewan portion of Flin Flon).
- Flin Flon's Aboriginal homeless population represent a high needs population with high levels of unemployment, low education and income levels, welfare dependence, trauma and health needs.
- On-reserve housing availability, due to over-crowding, was reported as a key factor revealing some jurisdictional issues.
- Addictions and mental health issues were significantly present in almost all cases being examined, identifying a strong need for other resources and services to address homelessness.
- The Aboriginal homeless population shares some of the same determinants of homelessness with

other homeless populations. They also experience additional unique factors stemming from colonial histories.

- A multi-service approach that is culturally relevant is needed with strong partnerships between organizations and communities to address Aboriginal homelessness.

The final report of this project made a number of recommendations for the Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre, in cooperation with other service and City organizations in Flin Flon.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. Final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Learning Together

STR8 UP, OSKAYAK HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Nancy Van Styvendale, Assistant Professor,  
English, University of Saskatchewan

Priscilla Settee, Associate Professor, Native  
Studies, University of Saskatchewan

Sarah Buhler, Assistant Professor, College  
of Law, University of Saskatchewan

Stan Tu'Inukuafe, Social Worker, Oskayak High  
School and Coordinator, STR8 UP.

This project is a participatory action-based research project based on Indigenous approaches that sought to bridge the divide between the university and Aboriginal communities in Saskatoon. This project brought together students from the University of Saskatchewan and students from Oskayak High School, a place that provides a safe, stable environment that enables students to experience academic success and personal healing by maintaining balance in all aspects of life: mind, body, emotion, and spirit. The program serves the Aboriginal community and members of STR8-UP, an innovative gang prevention group that supports individuals that are looking to exit the gang lifestyle. The program is the only gang intervention program in the city of Saskatoon.



**The 2014 Wahkohtowin class posing in front of Station 20 West in Saskatoon.**

"We went in as strangers, and left as friends". A former street gang member made this observation about his experience in an innovative, multidisciplinary community-based class that we developed and facilitated with our community collaborator, Stan Tu'Inukuafe in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 2014.

**An academic article was also published, please visit:**

[media.wix.com/ugd/bab59a\\_d12ae832af3648a89090cffe3f0b81f.pdf](https://media.wix.com/ugd/bab59a_d12ae832af3648a89090cffe3f0b81f.pdf)

## KEY FINDINGS

- Participants identified consistently that the emphasis on relationships and building community is one of the most significant aspects in the learning process that took place.
- Indigenous knowledge systems such as the circle model were central in structuring the teaching and learning that occurred in this research.
- Using an embodied pedagogy where participants shared their personal and lived experiences was central in gaining a true understanding of knowledge and the realities expressed on the topics of justice and injustice.
- Dialogue where individual lived experiences and stories were shared were a central element to this course and in many ways formed the core “texts”. Participants noted the power of the stories that were shared and how these stories in some cases transformed their world views from the dominant narratives. Offering a culturally relevant educational space for learning was a key factor in ensuring educational success and outcomes.

With assistance of research funding from the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (Prairie Region), we conducted a qualitative study following the program to investigate the impact on participants. We interviewed eleven out of fifteen students. Of these, five were university students, two were Oskayak students, and four were members of STR8 UP. Overall, they described the class as a profound and transformative experience.

A thirteen-week course teaching and learning model that aims to bridge the historical and cultural divides between the community and academic groups collaboration with community facilitator, Stan Tu’Inukuafe (Oskayak High School Social Worker) and Elder, Mike Maurice was developed out of this project. The class was entitled “Wahkohtowin,” which means “kinship” or “we are all related” in Cree, and covered topics on policing, the criminal trial, incarceration and restorative/Indigenous justice.

The class was informed by Indigenous and critical pedagogies and the advice of Elders and community members. Our research suggests that the Wahkohtowin class intervenes in dominant models of engaged pedagogy and community-service learning by disrupting notions of a university-community binary, decentering the role and place of university knowledge, and creating a space where students began to practice solidarity and imagine alternatives to our present situation.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. Final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Comparing the Lived Experiences of Urban Aboriginal Peoples with Canadian Rights to a Quality of Life

Dr. Isobel M. Findlay

Dr. Joe Garcea

Dr. John G Hansen; Rose Antsanen

Jethro Cheng, University of Saskatchewan

Bill Holden, Community Co- Director,

Community-University Institute for Social Research and City of Saskatoon

This study examines the lived experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples in relation to Quality of Life in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 2013-14. Over the past decade, Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) has charted what Quality of Life means to the citizens of Saskatoon. This study builds on that body of research with Aboriginal organizations and communities by assessing Quality of Life issues specific to urban Aboriginal peoples in Saskatoon.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Despite government recognition of the importance of improving Quality of Life, significant barriers remain for Aboriginal peoples.
- The findings in this study underline the need to focus not only on meeting basic survival needs of the urban Aboriginal population, but also that their cultural and spiritual needs are addressed, which are the foundation of Quality of Life.
- Major findings of this research are that discrimination, the legacies of residential schools and social problems further marginalize urban Aboriginal people. Decreased social inclusion, even alienation from their own culture and traditional teachings, adversely affected one's Quality of Life.
- There are significant gaps in Quality of Life of various socio-economic groups in Canada and underlines the disproportionate impact on Aboriginal peoples in health, education, employment, and poverty rates as well as their over-representation in the criminal justice system.
- Survey results revealed in this study show that by increasing education and training, improving the justice system, increasing the understanding of Aboriginal culture and rights, increasing employment opportunities, increasing community/social service funding, and increasing cultural and spiritual places are either "extremely important" or "very important" for improving the Quality of Life for Aboriginal people.
- The respondents indicated that the four major obstacles to their Quality of Life are: marginalization and subjugation (40%), cost of living (34%), health issues (13%), and lack of access to appropriate services and supports (12%).
- Decreased social inclusion, alienation from one's culture and traditional teachings adversely affected one's Quality of Life.
- Urban Aboriginal organizations such as Friendship Centres need enhanced support to provide the sort of safe social spaces and community services so necessary to Quality of Life.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. Final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Aboriginal Life Skills and Financial Literacy Curriculum and Education through the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC)

Dr. Bettina Schneider, First Nations University of Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan

Kim Wenger, Newo Yotina Friendship Centre, Regina, Saskatchewan

This research project's goal was to outline the best practices and challenges in delivering Aboriginal relevant life skills and financial literacy curriculum to the clients of the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre.

This research provides information on what is needed to adapt the current life skills and financial literacy programs that service urban Aboriginal people.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Literature shows that most urban Aboriginal people tend to face significant barriers to financial literacy and economic well-being.
- This research concurs with that assessment and found that individually tailored, culturally

appropriate approaches within workshops and aftercare services is critical in addressing the financial literacy and educational needs for urban Aboriginal Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC) clients.

- Focus groups in this study revealed there is a need to focus on addictions counseling in the life skills curriculum programming being offered by the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre.

This study revealed the need to develop stronger partnerships with the Ministry of Social Services and other community and government partners in delivering Aboriginal life skills and financial literacy programs and services.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. Final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# An Exploration of Addictions Recovery Among Aboriginal Peoples Who Utilize the Friendship Centre in Saskatoon

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALING



**Dr. John G Hansen, Sociology Department, University of Saskatchewan**

**Nicole Callihoo, Johnson Shoyoma Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan**

**Gwen Bear, Executive Director, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan**

This study examines the lived experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples in relation to Quality of Life in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 2013-14. Over the past decade, Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) has charted what Quality of Life means to the citizens of Saskatoon. This study builds on that body of research with Aboriginal organizations and communities by assessing Quality of Life issues specific to urban Aboriginal peoples in Saskatoon.

## KEY FINDINGS

- This study reveals how Aboriginal Friendship Centres are seen as a place of community and have the ability to assist in addictions recovery. Many respondents stated that cultural, spiritual, or traditional programs are necessary, and need to be offered at the Friendship Centre level to assist in recovery.

- Addictions recovery is a community responsibility and a holistic approach is needed.
- Participants identified social inclusion at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre as an important factor in the addictions recovery process, with a strong focus on ceremony, culture, family, and a sense of belonging.
- Findings suggest that there is a need for increased support for local, regional, and national governments for urban services utilized by the Aboriginal communities.
- Healing factors mentioned by participants were having children, family support, counseling, having a sense of belonging to a community, such as an Aboriginal Friendship Centre, traditional teachings, sweat lodge ceremonies, spirituality, and Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Research demonstrates that there are some strong linkages that need to be further examined between incarceration rates and addictions treatment.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increased support for local, regional, and national governments urban services utilized by the Aboriginal community. More specifically, Friendship Centres require access to resources to increase their ability to provide these essential services, like cultural and traditional programming.
- This study recommends establishing an addictions counsellor devoted to urban Aboriginal health issues; the community would benefit from addictions counsellors at Friendship Centres.
- This study recommends that national and provincial governments revise the funding process for addictions interventions in consultation with Aboriginal communities and increase core-funding measures to programs that are proven successful.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete, the final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# CENTRAL RESEARCH CIRCLE



**The Central Research Circle is based out of Trent University and is led by co-directors Professor David Newhouse, Trent University, Indigenous Studies and Dr. Kevin Fitzmaurice, University of Sudbury, Indigenous Studies. The Executive Committee of the Central RRC**

**includes representatives from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and Regroupment Des Centres D’Amitie Autochtones de Quebec. There are currently 5 funded research projects and a youth symposium in the Central Region to report on.**

HISTORY PROJECT

# Where Have We Come From?

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Though research concerning urban Indigenous communities has been expanding recently, there remains a gap in understanding of the historical experience of these communities. Urban centres formed due to the presence of, and in conjunction with, Indigenous communities. Yet, there are no significant histories of urban Indigenous communities in any city across Canada. This research project will document the histories of two urban centres in Ontario. The long-standing Indigenous communities in Sudbury and Ottawa will be examined.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## SERVICE DELIVERY

# Where Are We Now?

This project will examine the extent of service delivery and the organizational infrastructure of the OFIFC that supports urban Indigenous communities. As a leader in the field of Indigenous non-governmental organizations, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres is an example of a service delivery site that has spent many years refining culture-based practices of governance and leadership, but they have never been documented or analyzed. This work will document leadership within Friendship Centres and other successful Indigenous service delivery sites through examining existing best practices in the following urban areas: Peel, Niagara, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Fort Francis and London.

During the fall of 2015, the OFIFC 's Research Department established a culture-based primary data collection strategy in line with OFIFC's USAI

(Utility, Self-voicing, Access, and Inter-relationship) Research Framework to interview Indigenous leaders. In November 2015, the OFIFC Research Department met with leaders to document valuable stories and wise practices that provide insight into how influential Indigenous people exercise leadership in their communities. The overall goal and priority is to work on a multi-media project with an Indigenous youth filmmaker to compile audio and visual data that was collected. Another focus of this project is to consider the growth and expansion of urban Indigenous communities within these regions.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Review of the primary data includes tangible strategies to encourage youth to transform Indigenous community organizing, intersections between

organizational management approaches and traditional leadership practices, as well as community partnership building strategies to increase Indigenous peoples' economic, social and cultural contributions to their communities and beyond. As a result of this project, Indigenous leaders have been mobilizing around the topic of leadership and the importance of documenting wise practices around Indigenous knowledge transmission as well as culture-based organizational management. Many Indigenous leaders also spoke about the value of investing in Indigenous youth leadership in urban Indigenous communities throughout Ontario.

### CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## COMMUNITY DRIVEN RESEARCH APPROACH

There are approximately 15 northern organizations partnering on this project. A highlight for this project was the Community Café event held with over forty people in attendance made up of youth, service providers and students. This knowledge exchange event gave direction of the future data collection in this project and beyond!

## YOUTH PROJECT

# Where Are We Going?

This youth project will engage OFIFC Indigenous youth representatives in conversations around cultivating leadership in urban Indigenous communities throughout Ontario. The focus of this project is to document the stories and experiences of a diverse group of urban Indigenous youth and identify wise practices that have facilitated in the cultivation of leadership skills.

In addition, the Indigenous youth involved will examine and identify elements of youth leadership that are necessary in the future and suggest ways that these can be strengthened. The connection to traditional knowledge and the intersections of gender will be important elements of this research.

During the fall of 2015, the OFIFC Research Department engaged youth from several Friendship Centre communities including youth that participated in the OFIFC Indigenous youth-driven symposium in October 2013 titled, "Where We Have Come From and Where Are We Going". Indigenous youth were asked how this project would meet their previously determined research priorities.

This work focuses on a strength-based approach that follows OFIFC's USAI Research Framework (Utility, Access, Self Voicing, and Inter-Relationally) and will capture the vision they have from their communities from unique cultural perspectives. This work will also draw upon key findings and relevant intersections regarding leadership from the OFIFC's Where Are We Now? Project. This youth project will document Indigenous youth experiences using multi-media tools and will produce a best practices guide for urban Indigenous youth engagement that will outline some of the lessons learned throughout the research.

### CURRENT STATUS

In November 2015, the youth determined that they would like to approach the leadership project through the use of multi-media tools. In 2016, the OFIFC Research Department will meet with youth to document their experiences as youth in their communities using multi-media tools.

#### Anticipated completion: 2017

For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# Urban Aboriginal Community Building and the Basis of Aboriginal Economic Success in Sudbury

Dr. Kevin Fitzmaurice, University of Sudbury,  
Indigenous Studies – KINXUS

Suzanne Shawbonquit, Aboriginal  
Urban Resources Sudbury

This research idea came directly from the KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources '212' Economic Success Initiative.

This research project seeks to better understand the dynamics of urban Aboriginal community life and the factors that lead to Aboriginal people's success in Sudbury. The following three questions were at the heart of the research:

- Is there an Aboriginal middle class in Sudbury?
- What are the contributing factors to this economic success for Aboriginal people in Sudbury?
- How does individual economic success relate to urban Aboriginal community development and cohesion?

## PROJECT GOALS

- Community driven by KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources
- Better understand economic success in community
- Support urban Aboriginal community development
- Bridge Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business interests
- Create supportive professional network for Aboriginal entrepreneurs

## EMERGING ECONOMIC SUCCESS KEY FUTURE INSPIRATIONS

Preliminary findings reveal that emerging themes towards economic success is greater access to language and cultural education, particularly for their children. Increased Aboriginal education within

the provincial school system, including language instruction and an increased understanding and acceptance by non-Aboriginal society is needed to help end systemic and internal racism.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research has been completed and a final report is being prepared. For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Enhancing the Participation of Aboriginal People in the Socio-Economic Life in the City of Thunder Bay

## PHASE ONE

**Bahram Dadgostar, Lakehead University**

**Bernice Dubec, Thunder Bay Indian  
Friendship Centre**

**Karen Peterson**

The purpose of this research project is to create awareness and influence policy that could change the dynamic of the economic impact of Aboriginal people to Thunder Bay's economy. This project also aims to increase community capacity in building a sustainable and welcoming urban environment.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- The Aboriginal population in Thunder Bay contributes approximately 11% to the city's GDP which provides a significant contribution to employment opportunities for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents.
- The total purchasing power of the population both in Thunder Bay and in the region contributes to all economic sectors and a

continued growth is expected as the population continues to grow, and education levels increase, as well as a higher labour force participation rate coupled with resource development.

- A key finding revealed that approximately 92% of respondents indicated that they believe racism exists in Thunder Bay.

### CURRENT STATUS

This research is in the final stages. Once the first phase of this project is complete, the second phase of this project will aim at creating a supportive urban environment by influencing policy to enhance the participation rate of Aboriginal peoples employment and economic development by fostering economic stages between urban and rural communities for urban sustainability and mutual benefit.

For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# UAKN ATLANTIC



The UAKN Atlantic operates out of the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, in Fredericton. Dr. Verl  Harrop is the Director of the UAKN Atlantic and reports to an Executive Committee representative of the four Atlantic Provinces. Member composition of the Executive Committee follows SSHRC guidelines and includes urban Aboriginal community members and groups, Elders, emerging Aboriginal scholars, academics, practitioners and

government representatives. Working by consensus, the 13-member committee sets UAKN Atlantic's research priorities and ensures that the community-driven research they support meets the needs and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples living across Atlantic Canada. Presently, the UAKN Atlantic has 19 funded research projects with 5 final papers submitted and counting!

# "Our Histories, Our Stories"



## UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee

Carolyn Taylor, contractor

Gary Gould, General Manager of Skigin Elnoog Housing

Steven Foulds, Lawyer UNB Law School Professor

Elders, Glen Tremblay and Dana Sappier

The UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee developed this project to provide an Urban Aboriginal historical overview for the Atlantic Provinces. The UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee has elected to start the research with the history of New Brunswick; once this is complete and the methodology is refined, we will proceed with the remaining provinces: Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The goal of this project will also be to develop an educational discussion guide, a final report and a brochure. The research question for this project is, "What is the history of urban Aboriginal peoples in New Brunswick?"

This study will examine the following themes:

- Pre-history overview of territory, populations, governance structures and cultural practices
- Settler contact: historical timelines, locations and impacts and outcomes of this contact
- Settler/Aboriginal co-locations: impacts and outcomes

- Indian Act and subsequent legislation: impact and outcomes, historical overview
- Historical overview of urban Aboriginal organizations: mandate, population served, current role in the community

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# Re-visiting the Past, Re-imagining the Future

DOCUMENTING NBAPC ELDERS AND YOUTH LEADERS IN DIALOGUE

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**Josephine Savarese, Associate Professor,  
Department of Criminology and Criminal  
Justice, St. Thomas University**

**Elizabeth Blaney, Director, NBAPC**

**Lisa Jodoin, urban Aboriginal filmmaker,  
UNB Ph.D. Candidate/student researcher,  
Gary Gould, Elder**

**New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative**

This project aims to address the need to document the history of the organization identified as a priority by Elders in the urban Aboriginal community, and to use its legacy as a path towards forward movement on the pressing political issues that urban Aboriginal populations face in New Brunswick. The project will create a unique record that will preserve Elders' rich insights on the

NBAPC's past accomplishments and struggles and also on their dreams for the NBAPC's future. Their individualized accounts as advocates working in an urban context are an important resource to guide the future of the organization. In this project, we will provide Elders with an opportunity to share what the organization has meant to them and will document youth perspectives on advocacy by recording their responses to the Elders' stories.

This project addresses all five of the Legacy Project questions approved by the UAKN Executive Committee:  
*Who are we?; How did we get here?;  
What do we do?; Where are we going?;  
How are we getting there?*

This project seeks to further our understanding of urban Aboriginal people in New Brunswick. By recording the Elders' stories for the community, for the Youth Council and for future generations, this project will give the emerging leaders the foundational knowledge to answer the last two questions by themselves, on behalf of their community.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Wi'kupaltimk (Feast of Forgiveness)

A FILM EXPLORING THE CULTURE OF FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY  
AMONG THE URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION OF KJIPUKTUK (HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA)

**Pam Glode-DesRochers, Executive Director,  
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre**

**Dr. Trudy Sable, Director, Office of Aboriginal  
and Northern Research, Goresebrook Research  
Institute, Saint Mary's University**

**Kent Martin, former National Film Board  
producer/filmmaker**

**Salina Kemp, fourth year student,  
photographer, researcher, Saint Mary's  
University**

**Florence Blackett, All Nations Drumming Group,  
food security researcher, Millbrook First Nation  
Elder, Dr. Bernie Francis**

**Membertou First Nation. Mi'kmaw linguist,  
musician, author**

**Roger Lewis, M.A., Curator of Ethnology,  
archaeologist, author, Nova Scotia Museum,  
Shubenacadie First Nation**

**Lynn Langille, Health Disparities  
Coordinator for Public Health Canada**

This project will create a film titled *Wi'kupaltimk* (Feast of Forgiveness). This film will examine the experiences of urban Aboriginal people residing in Kijipuktuk (Halifax Regional Municipality) within a historical and cultural context. *Wi'kupaltimk* (Feast of Forgiveness) is a very fundamental concept that will run throughout this film.

The film is a celebration of the long rootedness of the Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal people in general, to their landscape prior to colonization, and the sacredness of the food that sustained them spiritually, culturally, and physically. While addressing many of the current issues of poverty, isolation, and food insecurity many urban Aboriginal people face, this film is ultimately about how people can and do respectfully connect with the urban landscape as a source of food and medicine. This process involves

connecting and re-connecting with the knowledge of the Elders, the importance of community, and the cultural importance of "feast" that is at the heart of the community. The film is a way to show how urban Aboriginal people are attempting to retain their traditional knowledge and establish their own food sovereignty. A question implicit to this process will be asked, "What is urban traditionalism, and how does food sovereignty play a role in what it means to people?" A main goal of this project is to educate the general public about the growing urban Aboriginal population.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## IN THE WORDS OF MI'KMAW LINGUIST AND ELDER, BERNIE FRANCIS

"There is sacredness about this concept in the form of 'forgiveness.' *Wi'kupaltimk* can be extended in meaning as in 'feeding one another's spirit' since it's the reciprocal form of the verb. It's difficult to capture in three words—'Forgiveness Feast while extending kindness and compassion' is another way of expressing it."

# Re-storying NunatuKavut

MAKING CONNECTIONS THROUGH MULTI-GENERATIONAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING

**Dr. Sylvia Moore, Assistant Professor  
Labrador Institute, MUN**

**Amy Hudson, PhD student, Memorial  
University from the Southern Inuit  
community of Black Tickle**

**Dr. Andrea Procter, MUN**

**Dr. Lisa Rankin, Associate Professor,  
Archaeology, MUN**

**Eva Luther, Elder**

**Darlene Wall, Social Sector Department  
for the NunatuKavut Community Council**

**Denise Cole leader from Charlottetown  
who currently lives in HVGB**

**Patricia Nash, NunatuKavut Community Council**

Southern Inuit from the NunatuKavut region of Labrador have started to challenge the established historical narratives that have been shaped by settler colonialism to reflect dominant interests about the land and its people. Much of the history produced is from a western male perspective. As a consequence, the female Southern Inuit voice and diverse versions of indigeneity have been minimized, and in some cases erased, from the narrative or story making process.

This project serves as a second phase of a previous research project between Memorial University and NunatuKavut

that will collect and disseminate multigenerational Southern Inuit women's stories with a larger emphasis on youth engagement.

This research project will have three main objectives:

- To encourage urban NunatuKavut youth to participate in the re-storying of historical narratives about the region and its people.
- To provide opportunities for urban NunatuKavut youth to develop their skills in digital storytelling, historical research, and interviewing.
- To provide opportunities for women and youth from NunatuKavut to connect stories from multiple generations in order to create new understandings of historical experiences and Indigenous identities.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.  
For more information on this project, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Let's Get It Right

CREATING A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE TRAINING MODULE AND IDENTIFYING LOCAL URBAN ABORIGINAL RESOURCES FOR NON-ABORIGINAL CAREGIVERS OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN NEW BRUNSWICK

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**Marilyn Dupre, PhD, Dean, School of Social Work, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick**

**Anne Caverhill, Program Manager, Child Protection, Department of Social Development, Government of New Brunswick**

**Community Partners: Patsy McKinney, Director Under One Sky and Elizabeth Blaney, New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council**

This project seeks to develop culturally appropriate support materials to be packaged in a training module for non-Aboriginal caregivers of Aboriginal children in care; and to identify urban Aboriginal community-based supports for those non-Aboriginal caregivers. This project also aims to establish processes and protocols for accessing those community-based resources and to determine what community-driven advocacy looks like and how culturally appropriate advocacy can be used to support and champion the desires and needs of Aboriginal children in care, their extended families and non-Aboriginal caregivers.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

There is a need for more input from the Aboriginal community on the development of a training module to be used for government social workers and foster parents. Cultural safety also needs to be explored more in depth in relation to this issue.

The end result will be the creation of a culturally appropriate 1-2 day training module for foster parents responsible for the day-to-day custody of Aboriginal children in the legal custody of the Minister of Social Development in New Brunswick.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is complete. The final report is in progress. For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Gendering the Duty to Consult

MAKING ABORIGINAL CONSULTATION RIGHTS MEANINGFUL TO ABORIGINAL WOMEN

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**Dr. Julia Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB**  
**Roy Stewart, JD Candidate, Faculty of Law, UNB**  
**New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council**  
**Elder, Imelda Perley**

This project follows up on our earlier work on the discussion paper regarding the constitutional duty to consult and the UAKN project titled, “Non-Status and Off-Reserve Aboriginal Representation in New Brunswick.” This research seeks to examine the gender dimension of the duty to consult and looks at whether the duty to consult as currently elaborated in the jurisprudence carries a gender bias.

Urban Aboriginal women have long complained that governmental engagement has been predominated by representing the interests of on-reserve populations and male-dominated organizations. However, these complaints have gone largely unheard by the courts. A key reason for this lack of responsiveness by the courts has been evidentiary. Our research seeks to lay the foundation towards making the case for an intersectional analysis and to draw

out the representational capacity and expertise of urban Aboriginal women as well as the gendered representational gap caused by reliance on Indian Act governance structures.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The duty to consult should be developed to account for the gender discriminatory history of the Indian Act. The consultative capacity of Aboriginal organizations representing and/or serving off reserve and non-status descendants in the maternal line is entirely adequate to the task. To date, this project has performed a literature review, written a legal research paper and presented the legal framework at CINSA 2015.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress.  
For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Non-Status and Off-Reserve Beneficiaries in New Brunswick

Dr. Jula Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB

Roy Stewart, JD Candidate, Faculty of Law, UNB

With the Governments of Canada and New Brunswick & Reserve-Based First Nation Band Councils & Members

Chief Wendy Wetteland, Elder Gary Gould, Dr. Elizabeth Blaney, and Sacha Boies-Novak

The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC) is an Off-Reserve Aboriginal voice for approximately 28,260 Status and Non-Status Aboriginal People who reside in New Brunswick. Members are widely dispersed throughout the province in rural areas, villages and cities. The NBAPC represents Aboriginal populations not residing on reserves. Within this report, the authors describe the four main constituencies that make up Aboriginal people who are eligible for NBAPC membership. Further, the authors make it clear that in describing these constituencies, the intent is not to further arbitrarily divide Aboriginal people in New Brunswick.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The report recommends that the NBAPC and its governmental and off-reserve leadership partners engage in discussions toward ensuring joint representation.
- The report recommends that the NBAPC be included as representative for this constituency in any treaty and land claims negotiations.
- The report recommends that the NBAPC and its governmental and on-reserve leadership partners engage in discussions towards ensuring the participation of this group and for NBAPC to represent them in these discussions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- NBAPC and its governmental and off-reserve leadership partners engage in discussions toward ensuring joint representation.

- NBAPC be included as a representative for non-status off reserve Aboriginal people in New Brunswick in any treaty and land claims negotiations.
- NBAPC and its governmental and on-reserve leadership partners engage in discussions towards ensuring the participation of the Harquail Clan and for the NBAPC to represent them in these discussions.
- NBAPC apply for research funding to conduct successive field research to engage with members of each of these never recognized communities.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Coming Out Stories

## TWO-SPIRIT NARRATIVES IN ATLANTIC CANADA

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**John R. Sylliboy, Consultant and  
Co-Founder of Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance**  
**Tuma Young, Associate Professor, Cape Breton  
University**  
**Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre**  
**Nova Scotia Government**  
**Mount Saint Vincent University**

This research project aims to assist the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance in its urgent need to conduct its own community-based research to address the knowledge gaps with respect to Two Spirits in Atlantic Canada. This research will also inform the development of supports for mental health and resilience, suicide prevention, Two Spirit cultural identity and awareness. To summarize, the research into the coming out stories of two-spirited Aboriginal persons living in communities and urban environments across the Atlantic region, will culminate in a publishable document titled, "Coming Out of Atlantic Two Spirits,"

that will provide a source of pride, empowerment and cultural identity. These are crucial for education, cultural awareness, and knowledge translation for the LGBTQ and non- LGBTQ communities in general.

The document produced from this project will be used to heighten awareness and increase knowledge sharing among Aboriginal communities, tribal organizations, First Nations education institutions, and the public at large. Most importantly, the research process and resulting documentation will be a source of healing for those who are dealing with their own struggles with coming out.

### CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress.  
For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Here Not There

AN URBAN ORIGINAL PODCAST

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**Neil Forbes, Director of Education,  
Lennox Island First Nation, PEI  
University of PEI**

This research project aims to establish an urban Aboriginal focused podcast on experiences and what it means to be an urban Aboriginal. With one podcast uploaded a month, this show would be able to provide 12 original conversations in one year. This podcast would have its own website, a Facebook page and a YouTube channel in order to have a discussion forum to encourage conversations and connections between urban aboriginals across the country. The purpose of this research project

is to promote the discussion of what it means to be an urban Aboriginal person in Canada. As urban Aboriginals, who are we? How did we get here? What do we do? Where are we going? How are we getting there? Through in-depth conversations, shared for free via podcast, with urban Aboriginals from all over Canada, *Here Not There* can lead the discussion needed to provide answers to some of these questions.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress.  
For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# “This is What I Wish You Knew”

IDENTITY AND WELL-BEING AMONG URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN HALIFAX

Dr. Amy Bombay, Dalhousie University,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre  
St. Mary's University; Nova Scotia College  
of Arts and Design  
Canada Council for the Arts  
McConnell Foundation  
Circle Foundation  
Royal Society of Canada  
The Academies of Arts, Humanities  
and Sciences of Canada

This research project explores urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Halifax. It will seek to understand the perceptions, understandings, and experiences of the urban environment including narratives reflecting values, beliefs, attitudes, cultural practices, feelings of belonging and perceptions of inequality and resilience.

This research project will use film as a method of data collection and as a dissemination strategy in a larger community-based participatory research

project exploring urban Aboriginal identity and mental health in Halifax. The following research questions, which build off of UAKN Atlantic's key questions, will guide this research:

## Who are we and how did we get here?

How do Aboriginal people in Halifax define and experience different aspects of their individual and collective identities in the urban setting, and how are these interrelated?

## What do we do?

What are the key strengths and challenges related to identity for Aboriginal people in Halifax and how do they navigate these?

## Where are we going and how are we getting there?

How are the impacts of urban living on Aboriginal identity related to mental health and well-being? What is needed to support Indigenous people's sense of identity, mental health, and well-being in Halifax?

This project aims to generate public discussion within the larger non-Indigenous community on the intersecting issues of urbanization, the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, societal attitudes, and federal, provincial and municipal governance. To date, this project has benefited from the strong partnerships that have enabled the expansion of both the scope and reach of this initiative. This project is one of six art projects to receive inaugural (Re)conciliation initiative funding through the Canada Council for the Arts, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. The mural and films are planned to launch June 2016. For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



# Urban Aboriginal Families With Children in Care

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF PARENTS LIVING IN FREDERICTON AND HALIFAX

Étienne Paulin, PhD Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Université de Moncton

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

Under One Sky – Monoqonuwicik

Neoteetjig Mosigisig

This research project aims to promote the well-being of Aboriginal families living in Atlantic Canadian urban contexts by considering the point of view of parents with children placed in out-of-home care. It seeks to give importance to the voices and concerns of the primary caretakers themselves and to better understand their day-to-day lived experiences, challenges and needs, both as parents and in their dealings with the mainstream child welfare system. The vision of this project is to use film as a way to tell and share stories on themes exploring urban Aboriginal identity and mental health in Halifax with the public.

The research process will take into account the views of service providers – including frontline state social workers and foster families – and seek to translate the gathered knowledge into a community action plan. It is expected that results produced by this research process will help design family or community-centered child welfare practices, programs and policies that are both more effective and more respectful of the distinctiveness and resilience of urban Aboriginal families.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress.

For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

## HOW COMMUNITY DRIVEN RESEARCH WORKS

The vision for this project came from the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, success of this research and strong relationship building has led to the planning of a phase 2.

# Urban Aboriginal Well-being, Wellness and Justice

A MI'KMAW FRIENDSHIP CENTRE NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR CREATING A COLLABORATIVE INDIGENOUS MENTAL RESILIENCY, ADDICTIONS AND JUSTICE STRATEGY

L. Jane McMillan, PhD StFX University

Pamela Glode-Desrochers Executive Director  
of Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre Halifax,  
Nova Scotia

Research assistance from Janelle Young  
and Killa Atencio

The main goal of this project was to facilitate and promote community-driven approaches to well-being, wellness, and justice through collaborative cultural empowerment of urban Indigenous populations and to foster the capacity building prevention, intervention, and reintegration services of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Urban Indigenous experiences of wellness, well-being and justice are complex, gendered, and diverse.
- The Friendship Centre serves critical kinship functions by providing a “safe” and “healing” place.

- Service gaps are exacerbated by compartmentalized approaches to healing.
- Significant need for education programs and experiential learning opportunities to engage with Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- Holistic trauma and post Residential School supports are lacking.
- Culturally relevant assessment / mapping tools are critical to building effective navigation support services.
- The MNFC is a site of reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous peoples through its cultural exchange and healing programs and these programs need ongoing support.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Creation Stories

## URBAN ABORIGINAL EARLY EDUCATION AND LITERACY INTERVENTION

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**Neil Forbes, Director of Education, Lennox Island First Nation**

**Greg McKenna, Ph. D Research Consultant, Applied Research Department, Holland College University of Prince Edward Island**

This research project seeks to create a culturally grounded curriculum for a pre-natal and early years program for expectant Aboriginal mothers and Aboriginal parents (newborn to 3 years of age) in urban settings.

This project aims at combining traditional ways of knowing and teaching with relevant and effective research. Our team hopes to create a model to empower and enrich the lives of urban Aboriginal people during the early period of parenthood. Not only will this

support cultural identity during a critical period of transition, but it will be another step in creating a community that supports culture and knowledge.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

There is a gap in urban Aboriginal focused programming. A recommendation that arose was a pilot project to further explore the created curriculum out of this project.

### CURRENT STATUS

This research is complete. Final report in progress. For more information visit, [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# “Isolated Events?”

## CONNECTING PATTERNS OF STRUGGLE AND VULNERABILITY IN YOUNG URBAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN’S NARRATIVES IN KJIPUKTUK (HALIFAX)

**Dr. Trudy Sable, St. Mary’s University**

**Dr. Darryl Leroux, St. Mary’s University**

**Chenise Haché, Initiative for Advocacy and Research into Violence Against Indigenous Women**

**Elder, Debbie Eisan from the Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Centre**

This research project aims to connect the stories of missing and murdered Aboriginal women to one another, which research shows are not just isolated events. In doing so, we hope to document their stories, and create a comprehensive understanding of the systemic challenges they face. We will also look at stories of women who have persevered in the face of these struggles and explore the points of resilience and strength that gave them a sense of safety and fulfillment in their lives.

While each of their lives and deaths are unique, research demonstrates that they all experience the social forces at play that disenfranchise, displace, and disadvantage Aboriginal women and girls in Canadian society. These troublesome patterns of violence cause indescribable pain to the families and communities that share their histories with missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women.

Using a phenomenological-based, narrative approach, we will question the effects that the phenomenon of missing and murdered Aboriginal women has on the self-perception and sense of personal safety of Aboriginal women currently residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Research questions will include:

Is there an inherent fearfulness urban Aboriginal women in Halifax experience because they identify with murdered and/or missing women, both culturally and through shared life experiences and conditions? If so, within this culture of fearfulness, are there avenues of educational, professional, or cultural support and development for these women to experience a more fulfilling and secure life?

### CURRENT STATUS

This research is complete. Final report is in progress. For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Navigating Government Services

THE “LIVED EXPERIENCE” OF YOUNG URBAN ABORIGINAL FAMILIES RESIDING IN FREDERICTON, NB

Lisa Jodoin, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, University of New Brunswick

Research Team: Dr. Ann Sherman, Dean Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick

Patsy McKinney, Executive Director, Under One Sky Head Start

Jenny Perley, Community Researcher

Carla Gregan-Burns, Regional Director, Region 3 Department of Social Development

Gary Gould, General Manager, Skigin-Elnoog Housing Corporation

Wendy Wetteland, President and Chief, New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council

Amanda LeBlanc, Vice Chief, New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council

Joanne Marquis-Charron, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

Dr. Verlié Harrop, Director, UAKN Atlantic, and Anthea Plummer, Research Associate.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Three broad headings emerged service gaps and barriers, funding gaps, and impermanence of programs and funding.
  - Fredericton's Aboriginal population is young, highly mobile, and largely female.
  - Developing a fully functional Friendship Centre or Family Resource Centre in Fredericton will also be instrumental in offering culturally relevant programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in a safe and comfortable setting.
  - Strengthening communication between government and community organizations and building strong partnerships are crucial to the improvement of programs and services for off-reserve Aboriginal people
- There are many gaps in funding that are unique to off-reserve Aboriginal people compared to those living on reserve.
  - The impermanence of available programs and services can have a profound impact on urban Aboriginal people.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

The Friendship Centre is developing resources based on the findings and community recommendations such as an ethics protocol and toolkit.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerged out of this study. The following require the participation of both urban Aboriginal organizations and government in order to realize these goals.

- 1. Build strong partnerships** between urban Aboriginal community organizations and government service providers to work together to improve access to services for off-reserve Aboriginal people. Strengthen communication between service providers and community organizations and commit to working together towards creating programs and services that cater to the unique needs of off-reserve people.
- 2. Foster a strong and functional Friendship Centre** or Family Resource Centre in Fredericton to help centralize access to services, to increase the number of much-needed services for urban Aboriginal people, and to create programs and services that are more self-sufficient in their funding model.
- 3. Keep data on program participants** in order to have a record of the success rate of programs that face being cut. Such data can be used as leverage in seeking funding renewal or in attempts to fund similar programs in the future.
- 4. Provide mandatory “Aboriginal Awareness” programming** to all government employees.
- 5. Develop a counselling program for urban Aboriginal families** to nurture strong parenting skills, to help treat addictions issues, and to foster health and well-being amongst the off-reserve population. This could be run through a Friendship Centre or Family Resource Centre.
- 6. Incorporate Aboriginal cultures, history, and languages** into all school curricula, not as a side note or module, but as a core component of school programming so that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students can become better educated about Aboriginal people and the history of this country.
- 7. Create an online database or a comprehensive website** where urban Aboriginal people can go to learn about what programs and services are available to them and to find contact information for these services.
- 8. Build a mechanism of advocacy for off-reserve people in Fredericton.** A collective of people who will advocate on behalf of off-reserve people, who have the knowledge and contacts to do so in order to ensure that the urban Aboriginal population is receiving access to the services they need, whether it be Non-Insured Health Benefits, Legal Aid, Housing, Social Development issues, or Employment Assistance. Such a mechanism could be provided by a functional Friendship Centre or Family Resource Centre.

# Women's Narratives from the St. John's Native Friendship Centre

## USING DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO INFORM COMMUNITY-BASED HEALING AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Ashley Hong, MSc Candidate Faculty of Medicine, Division of Community Health and Humanities, Memorial University

Breannah Tulk, Community Lead Community Programs Coordinator

St. John's Native Friendship Centre

The St. John's Native Friendship Centre (SJNFC) has designed violence prevention initiatives aimed to provide services that empower women through mentorship, education, and culturally rich experiences. This project aims to understand the meaning of violence for women who use programs and services at the SJNFC. Using Digital Storytelling, this research will collect women's narratives in the context of their life story. This research project's goal is to identify needs, strategies, and challenges for violence prevention services at SJNFC; to create a tool for violence healing strategies for the SJNFC; make recommendations for community-based healing and violence prevention programming nationally; and advance academic theory on decolonizing methodologies for research within Indigenous communities. This project has allowed for the celebration of women by honouring and respecting their lived experiences. By the end of the digital storytelling workshop, an intricacy of detailed narratives had developed, providing rich embroideries of women's unique voices.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Education and Training

- Peer Healing: Increase number of members who are trained in crisis intervention and violence prevention.
- Allow women to provide recommendations to NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, because they feel their needs are not recognized.
- Continue educating and promoting Indigenous cultures in the wider St. John's community.
- Develop a resource manual that would assist women in accessing materials or other programming across the St. John's area.
- Develop a resource manual that focuses on reconciliation and that addresses Canada's colonial history: promote strong relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### Economic Development

- Hire a professional to assist members in job searches and career services. Women discussed feelings of disappointment over the closure of the Employment Resource Centre, including the loss of computers.

- Bridge gap between individuals moving to St. John's for the first time, specifically for individuals that may be experiencing culture shock (e.g. employment, educational, and housing assistance).

#### Programs and Services

- Tea and Sharing: Women discussed the feeling of wanting to attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but due to conflicting schedules, they could not attend. When possible, allow for more flexibility for multiple generations to spend time together (e.g. Elders and Youth program).
- Yoga and Zumba: Provide transparency to women as to why "non-Indigenous" programs are offered. This caused some confusion for women; greater transparency is needed to address how funding is allocated.
- Land-based Healing: Implement programs that allow families to get back on to the land to practice traditional activities and healing.
- Elders' Programs: Create trauma/strength-based programs that allow women and men who attended Residential/Day Schools to gather together.
- Family-based programs: When possible, include intergenerational programs and services (especially retreats).



- Networking: Create a pan networking/trading group that would allow members to access traditional teachings (e.g. workshops, online resources, teacher guests for crafts/singing/dancing).
- Use trauma-informed approaches to healing.
- Continue to carry out programs on a case-per-case basis; each person has unique and complex needs.
- Art Program: Continue to support local artists and expand art showcase.
- Healing Circles: Continue to hold sharing circles, increase frequency if possible.



**Photo from the three-day Digital Storytelling workshop, July 2014**

When we were on day 2 (of 3) of the digital storytelling workshop and an Elder who was participating in the project decided to share a film that she had made for the TRC. She has never showed the film to anyone, not even her family. It was a very powerful moment for everyone because she felt strong and comfortable enough to show all the women involved in the project. Not only was it meaningful, but it demonstrates the power of healing when Indigenous/non-Indigenous women gather to discuss what healing and violence is on their own terms and within their own context.

### **Traditional Materials/Medicines**

- Having access to traditional medicines would greatly benefit the members.
- Working with traditional materials during arts and crafts workshops and sessions are a top priority for members.
- Increase number of drums and access to practice spaces.
- Access to kitchen/space to be able to prepare and serve traditional foods (especially during feasts).

### **CURRENT STATUS**

This project is complete. A final report is in progress. Thesis publication is forthcoming and online resources for the SJNFC website are being developed in addition to the creation of 4 digital story films.

# Fostering Educational Success for Off-Reserve Aboriginal Learners on Prince Edward Island

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Darrell DesRoches, Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Alanna Taylor, Cox and Palmer Prince Edward Island

Brittany Jakubiec, Research assistant

This research project revealed a number of dominant themes related to the educational successes of off-reserve Aboriginal learners on Prince Edward Island. Partnerships and relationship building were highlighted throughout the study.

## KEY FINDINGS

Findings highlighted the following points to be important for student success:

- Solid relationships with caring teachers; a caring school environment; effective delivery of curriculum; hands-on activities; and internal/external support.
- Barriers to educational success identified were expressed as not enough social time in school; student and parent feelings of failure, frustration, and pressure; transition to new schools; and stories associated with racism.

- To provide learning experiences where students feel successful; to use multiple instructional methods; to thread more Aboriginal content and ways of knowing into mainstream education; to promote the Mi'kmaq language, culture, and spirituality; to have a greater Elder presence in education; and to promote sports, extra-curricular activities, and other such events throughout the school community.
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders, educators, parents, and community members to engage in rich discussions and to create an action plan related to educational success and well-being among Aboriginal learners on Prince Edward Island.
- Holistic principles that encompass the value of education and learning that supports the well-being of self, family, community, the land, the spirits and one's ancestors hold great strength when looking at educational success.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Aboriginal Nursing Students' Capacity to Succeed in a Baccalaureate Nursing Program

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF ABORIGINAL NURSING STUDENTS WHO HAVE PRIMARILY RESIDED IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT COMPARED TO THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED PRIMARILY IN AN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

**Kathy Wilson, RN, PhD, Assistant Dean of Graduate and Advanced RN Studies – UNBF, FON, MacLaggan Hall, Fredericton, NB**

**Shelley Francis, Urban Aboriginal Community Member, RN, BN, CDE, UNBI's Diabetes Educator, and UNBF FON's Coordinator for the Aboriginal Nursing Initiative Tobique First Nation**

The purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of Aboriginal nursing students who are enrolled at UNBF, how they develop the capacity to succeed in a baccalaureate nursing program, and what, if any, differences exist between those who have lived primarily in an urban environment compared to those who have lived primarily in an Aboriginal community prior to enrolling in the nursing program.

Objectives of this study include to:

1. Identify the experiences of Aboriginal nursing students who are enrolled in the UNBF baccalaureate-nursing program – both those who have lived in urban environments and those who have lived in Aboriginal communities.
2. Understand the strengths and assets of Aboriginal students that contribute to success during their time in the program.
3. Understand the barriers to success encountered by Aboriginal nursing students enrolled in the nursing program.
4. Understand interventions that have supported students' learning and progression through the nursing program.
5. Use students' accounts of their experiences to develop approaches that support resiliency during their university education.
6. Identify any variation in strategies required for success of students who have grown up in an Aboriginal community and those who have spent the majority of their lives in an urban environment.

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress.

For more information, visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Urban Aboriginal Populations and the Honour of the Crown

Dr. Julia Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB

Roy Stewart, JD Candidate, Faculty of Law, UNB

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

Native Council of PEI

Under One Sky Head Start

New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council

Government of New Brunswick – Department

of Social Development Government of New

Brunswick – Employment and Continuous

Learning Services

This research project brings together research on urban Aboriginal populations, institutions, and political structures with research on the legal doctrine of the duty to consult. It queries whether the duty to consult has application to urban, off-reserve populations and if so, how this duty should be conceptualized. This project attempts to lay the groundwork for this research by describing some of the organizations representing urban Aboriginal people and/or providing services to them in Atlantic Canada, setting out the existing case law, state of the jurisprudence and academic commentary, and by putting forth areas where further research will be required.

## MAIN FINDINGS

- It is apparent from the discussion of case law describing the circumstance of the duty to consult, that the duty to consult has so far been explored in the context of land based rights.
- These rights are important to urban Aboriginal people who continue to hunt, harvest, hunt, fish, and live off the land at various times. However, other rights may be equally or more important to these populations in the long run, including personal property, linguistic, and cultural rights.
- However, it is a question within the jurisprudence whether a duty to consult could extend to urban Aboriginal populations separately, or to situations where government is under an affirmative obligation to provide a service, or where government has historically provided service that is now altering or abandoning.
- Whether a constitutional duty to consult in any of these outlined areas or others is ultimately

found, government consultation should be encouraged for reasons of reconciliation and because stakeholder consultation is an important element of good governance practice.

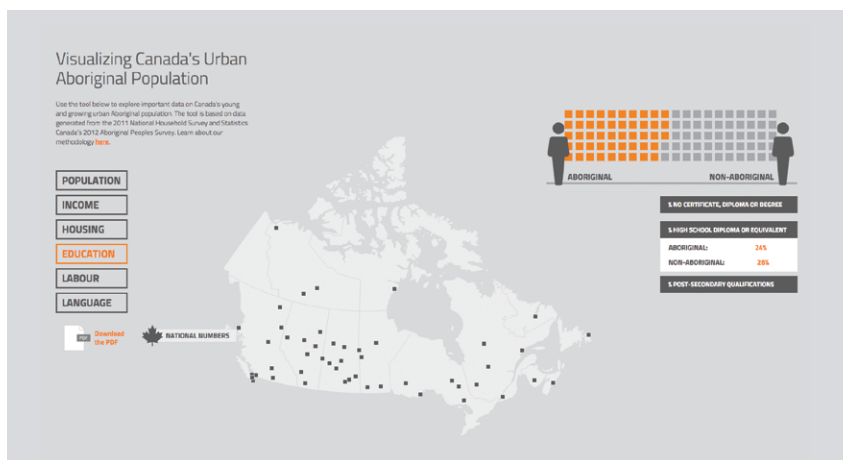
- This study examines how a better approach to achieving reconciliation is by reaching a settlement through good faith negotiations by both parties, without resorting to litigation.
- Important to consider that the majority of Aboriginal people in Canada live off reserve, and their interests do not always align with the interests of on-reserve populations.
- The questions about who resides on and off reserve and the question of membership both deeply implicates some of the discriminatory policies of the past, thus invoking the Honour of the Crown.

## CURRENT STATUS

This project is complete. The final paper and research brief can be found at [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# UAKN NATIONAL PROJECT

The UAKN National Project is complete. This project sought to examine and identify urban Aboriginal service delivery gaps across the country. The final report for this project, which includes chapters from each of the regions, will be available in April 2016, on [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).



This tool explores important data on Canada's young and growing urban Aboriginal population. This tool is based on data generated from Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey and 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. You can access information on population, income, housing, education, labour and language.

[uakn.org/demographics/](http://uakn.org/demographics/)

# CINSA 2016



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This year, the UAKN is pleased to participate in the 2016 Canadian Indigenous/Native Studies Association (CINSA) Conference as a co-host along with First Nations University of Canada in Regina, Saskatchewan, June 22-24, 2016. This event will serve as a national conference for the UAKN. This year's theme will be, "Reconciliation through Research – Fostering miyo-pimātsiwin." Stay tuned for registration and event details! For more information visit: [uakn.org/cinsa/](http://uakn.org/cinsa/)

# Ethical Principles Guiding UAKN Community Driven Research

## UAKN GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Research undertaken through the UAKN is premised on implementing meaningful change at the community level and must be community driven. A key document that has emerged out of the UAKN that guides all research taking place across the regions is the UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles.

The UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles encompasses an acknowledgment of community ethics concerning research. It is further recognized that this document is a small iteration of the many Indigenous ethical protocols currently in existence. At the October 2015 UAKN Aboriginal Circle and Network Council meeting, the Guiding Ethical Principles were updated.

Principles that guide all research undertaken through the UAKN need to take it a step further and ask the question: How does this benefit urban Aboriginal communities and people? Broadly these principles encompass some key ethical considerations when conducting research with Aboriginal peoples that highlight how research methodologies must be in line with Indigenous values; ensuring there is community and academic accountability; ensuring that research benefits the community and that the research is an ally and will not do harm (Kovach, 2009; OFIFC's Research Presentation Protocol, 2012). For example, academic institutions should not profit from community driven research.

This document states that all research projects will be community driven and promote relational accountability in the following ways:

1. Research is grounded in community priorities, and constructed or designed collaboratively between communities and researchers.
2. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's languages, cultural protocols, values, life cycles and gender(s).
3. Research conducted is respectful of Aboriginal people's research approaches and protocols.
4. Aboriginal peoples and organizations will be an active participant in the research process at the level of their choosing.
5. Principles of USAI (Utility, Self-Voicing, Access and Inter-relationality, (OFIFC) and OCAPTM (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession, (FNIGC) will be looked to as useful and guiding references informing community driven research.

The UAKN Guiding Principles also ensure that the protection and well-being of all individuals and communities involved in research are respected. The principles also attempt to minimize negative impacts and ensure that the research serves the greater good of society.

A breakthrough approach of ongoing consent is also outlined. The notion of ongoing consent must be applied to the research practices and processes. In this context, consent is not static and rather is an evolving and changing concept that must be negotiated throughout the project including where, how and by who results will be disseminated. Consent must operate on a continuum built through relationships, respect and understanding, which means that a participant can choose to withdraw their consent at any time. The principles of respect, honesty, community relevance and practicality must be a part of the research and its processes.

Another key principle of community driven research is recognizing communities and Indigenous peoples as experts in the research process. This means that the ownership and intellectual property rights lie within the communities and/or individuals that share their knowledge and contribute to the research. The authorship must reflect this.

To view the full UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles Document, visit: [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

# Staying Connected to the UAKN

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**The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, the UAKN, is a community driven research network focused on the urban Aboriginal population in Canada.**

The UAKN establishes a national, interdisciplinary network involving universities, community, and government partners for research, scholarship and knowledge mobilization. This research was funded by a SSHRC Partnership grant entitled Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network: research for a better life. For more information visit [uakn.org](http://uakn.org).

We post the latest information relevant to community driven research, research related resources, conferences, events and of course research results and findings. Connect with us online today to stay informed!

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