



RESEARCH PROJECT SUMMARY

Western Research Centre

Name of Project:

Urban Resilience through Enhanced Indigenous Networks – Preliminary Research

This project will consist of a literature review and information scan that will inform the next phases of the research by helping to shape the approach to the Social Network Analysis (SNA) methodology and its implementation. This approach will provide greater information on how Indigenous youth interact with both the natural and human environments within an urban context elucidating the sociocultural aspect of importance. Understanding these relational environments will better enable the development of housing and whole urban design and development to support Indigenous youth often at risk during the transitory periods.

Research Start-up Summary and Abstract:

Many rural communities of Northern British Columbia are struggling with migration of their youth population to larger, urban environments. In the case of Indigenous youth, issues associated with this migration extend beyond a loss to their home communities, as evidence shows that their move to an urban environment often results in a dangerous change in lifestyle. It has been shown that recently migrated Indigenous youth are increasingly being recruited into gang life or the sex trade, thus leaving them at greater risk to becoming involved in crime or in activities that put their health and well-being at risk (Buddle, 2011; Sikka, 2010).

This research project will gather knowledge and highlight best practices in urban Indigenous housing applicable to migrating indigenous youth but also the challenges for urban Indigenous people obtaining adequate accommodation and cultural support networks. The knowledge scan inclusive of a literature reviews will guide the general development of future research phases and design the social network survey.

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Engagement Objectives:

The main purpose of this project is to conduct a knowledge scan through information gathering intended to support subsequent stages of research (i.e., the development and implementation of SNA methodology leading to policy recommendations). The following outline the research objectives:

Objective 1 - Conduct a literature review on urban Indigenization initiatives with emphasis on Indigenous youth. Focus areas will include adequate youth housing as part of the broader issue of loss of and deficient support systems includes aging out of government support systems. This initial scan will be limited to Canada and New Zealand.

Objective 2 - Choose cities, three from Canada (e.g., Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Regina etc.) and one example city from New Zealand (e.g. Rotorua District, Wairoa, etc.) with high Indigenous populations to gather information on how those cities have addressed the challenges facing Indigenous youth as they adapt to an urban environment, with an emphasis on housing issues.

Objective 3 – Review and incorporate findings from the recently completed housing study conducted by the Aboriginal Housing Society of Prince George and the upcoming housing survey public engagement process.

Methodology:

One Masters student will be tasked with conducting the literature review, using the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (<http://uakn.org/>) as a starting point. The UAKN is a research network of urban Aboriginal communities, policy makers, and academics, who are engaged in community driven research.

An undergraduate student will be tasked with gathering information on how Canadian and New Zealand cities have addressed issues facing migrating Indigenous youth. Information will be gathered from the cities' websites, OCP's and, other available literature (e.g. journals, reports, etc.). A technical writer/expert will assist with the review and completion of a final document.

Main contact:

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Cites:

Buddle, K. (2011). Urban Aboriginal Gangs and Street Sociality in the Canadian West. *Aboriginal Peoples In Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities*, 171.
Sikka, A. (2010). Trafficking of Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.