



UAKN | RCAU  
Urban Aboriginal  
Knowledge Network | Réseau de connaissances des  
Autochtones en milieu urbain



# 2013 – 2014 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE  
NETWORK (UAKN)

2013 – 2014

# SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

---

URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (UAKN)

MARCH 2014



@TheUAKN



/TheUAKN

**Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network**

275 MacLaren Street Ottawa, ON K2P 0L9

613.563.4844 | [uakn.org](http://uakn.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01 Overview of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN)
- 02 Strength of Partnerships
- 02 Regional Research Centres
- 03 Regional Research Project Updates
- 06 Prairie Research Centre Projects Update
- 11 Central Research Circle Projects Update
- 13 Aboriginal Youth-Driven Research Symposium
- 15 Atlantic Research Centre Project Update
- 17 The UAKN – Keeping the Research Circle Strong
- 18 Staying Connected to the UAKN



# OVERVIEW OF THE URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (UAKN)

---

## THE NEED FOR URBAN ABORIGINAL RESEARCH

According to the National Household Survey (NHS) 2011, nearly 60% of Aboriginal peoples live in urban areas. Until recently, there has been little research on the dimensions of urban Aboriginal peoples lives, their challenges and opportunities. The complexity of living in an urban centre and gaining access to a better life has not been examined and analyzed in depth. Providing a true picture on the place of First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada's cities will help to develop progressive and positive public policy.

In an effort to close these knowledge gaps, the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) co-led the creation of the UAKN in 2007. With support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the UAKN is poised to work collaboratively to ensure urban Aboriginal research is led by the community, for the community.

## THE URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (UAKN)

The UAKN consists of scholars representing a variety of disciplines from across Canada and a number of organizations that provide services to urban Aboriginal peoples. The network has been established on a model of partnership in the co-creation of knowledge since its inception in 2007.

The UAKN involves urban Aboriginal communities, under the lead of the National Association of Friendship Centres, which plays a central role in the network. With a strong focus on combining both research and inclusive knowledge mobilization through the process of community driven research, the

### A SNAPSHOT ON THE URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN CANADA:

For the most updated statistics on the Urban Aboriginal population in Canada visit: <http://uakn.org/news-and-resources/facts-stats-data-insight/>

UAKN intends to ensure that the benefits of Aboriginal research begins with Aboriginal communities and ends with an improved quality of life for urban Aboriginal peoples. It is one intention of the UAKN to support and contribute to reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians through this work. For more information on the UAKN, visit [www.uakn.org](http://www.uakn.org).

# STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIPS

---

Partnerships are the foundation of the UAKN. Without the support of our partners the UAKN would not be in the current position of strength that they are now. Specifically, the regional research projects and governance attests to the effectiveness of the UAKN partnerships. The 17 funded regional research projects highlight the strength of these partnerships.

The UAKN also continues to foster partnerships among existing and new partners as we round out year two of the five year SSHRC Partnership Grant. Upon the success of our Grant proposal, we had a total of 64 formal partners. As the UAKN moves forward we will continue to add additional partners, both formal and informal to broaden the UAKN Network's reach.

## **PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS: BUILDING COMMUNITIES:**

The UAKN would like to highlight a video resource created by SSHRC titled, *Partnership for Success: Building Communities*. Please see UAKN representatives David Newhouse (Principle Investigator) and Tricia McGuire-Adams (former UAKN Secretariat Director) speaking about their research partnership, which examines how people build successful communities. To watch the video click on the link: <http://bit.ly/1gF0amY>

# REGIONAL RESEARCH CENTRES

---

All the SSHRC funded research goes through the four Regional Research Centres (RRCs): a Western Research Centre based out of University of Northern British Columbia; a Prairie Research Centre based out of University of Saskatchewan; a Central Research Circle based out of Trent University; and an Atlantic Research Centre based out of the University of New Brunswick.

Each Regional Research Centre serves as a host institution and connects regional universities and

researchers drawn from a cross-section of academic disciplines. Networks of researchers, representatives of urban Aboriginal communities and organizations, policy-makers from different orders of government and practitioners come together to determine research priorities, make decisions and facilitate knowledge dissemination. Once research projects are completed, research reports will be uploaded to the UAKN website.

# REGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATES

---

## WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE PROJECT UPDATE

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

## A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF URBAN ABORIGINAL HEALING AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES IN CANADA

*Dr. Ross Hoffman, UNBC and Jessie King, PhD Candidate*

This research project is composed of two parts, a literature review and an environmental scan. The purpose of the literature review was to gain a clear sense of the nature and scope of the research that has focused on the topic of healing initiatives for Aboriginal peoples that have and are presently taking place within urban contexts. The purpose of the environmental scan was to gain a sense of the scope and the nature of the actual Aboriginal healing programming that presently exists within urban Aboriginal organizations in Canada.

**Current stage:** The literature has been reviewed and annotated bibliographies have been completed. The environmental scan has been completed for eight provinces. Anticipated research results will be a report that contains the Literature Review and the results of the Environmental Scan.

**Anticipated Results:** Spring 2014

## DOES SUBSIDIZED HOUSING AID ABORIGINAL TRANSITION INTO THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT? A FRONT-LINE SERVICE-DELIVERY PERSPECTIVE FROM LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

*Dr. Yale Belanger University of Lethbridge and Rosie Many Grey Horses, 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority*

This research project is a qualitative exploration of the barriers to Aboriginal urban acclimation as experienced by Treaty 7 Housing clients with the intention of improving Treaty 7 Housing staff's ability to respond to its clients' needs without alienating them as they are readied for home ownership/rental capacity. The research will guide Treaty 7 Housing administrators in the development of internal educational programming to prepare those leaving subsidized housing and to facilitate their entry into the mainstream rental and/or homeownership market.

**Current stage:** Literature review is completed; interviews are nearing completion, transcription and coding of interviews has commenced. It is anticipated that future research alliances will be developed leading to additional research on the various issues identified in the completed report.

**Anticipated Results:** Spring – Summer 2014

### EXPLORING THE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES OF PARTNERING WITH URBAN ABORIGINAL PARTNERS TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

*Leslie Brown and Beverly Smith, University of Victoria; the Victoria Native Friendship Centre; the WSANEC school board; the Aboriginal principals of Aboriginal Education in the Victoria; Sooke and Saanich school districts; and the Island Métis Family & Community Services Society.*

This research project explores the process and outcomes of developing and implementing culturally sensitive physical activity resources for young urban Aboriginal children (ages 3-8). This was done with in a participatory and collaborative approach.

**Preliminary Findings/Results:** Highlights of this project are the development of Aboriginal resources for young children- 3 distinct communities to provide culturally relevant physical activity and literacy resources for young children. The UAKN funding is now allowing this project to further study and document the process of co-creation, allowing reflection on the process across these 3 unique contexts; enhancing their understanding of what works in community and how to contribute to a better quality of life. Stayed tuned for more updates!

**Anticipated Results:** Summer – Fall 2014



*Child participant in a focus group to develop educational resources for young children that nurture cultural identity.*

**“The activities herein offer age-appropriate experiences for nurturing Métis identity and consciousness, self-concept, self-esteem and self-determination”.**

**Patricia Ekland, Iskwew Michif, Firekeeper**

### TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION OF URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH

*Shelly Johnson, University of British Columbia; Leslie Brown, University of Victoria; Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services; Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents; and Broadway Youth Resource Centre*

This research project aims to address the question, 'what or who could make you want to stay in school?' The objective is to identify strategies that could improve the educational success of urban Aboriginal youth in foster care. This is a participatory action research project in which each youth group (3) independently decided on the medium they used to respond to the research question.

**Current Stage:** The written data will be analysed by the researchers and a paper will be submitted for publication as well as presented at a conference in May 2014 showcasing community-university partnerships.

**Preliminary Findings/Results:** On October 18, 2013, they presented their responses at a one day conference at UBC and together with 50 adults in attendance, worked to develop strategies and recommendations based on the youth responses. Out of this conference, a 22 minute professional-grade video was produced. As per their ethics approval, the video is owned by the youth, therefore the youth have the decision-making authority to decide how they wish it disseminated. Also at the conference, written data provided by research participants was collected and this is currently being analysed by the researchers to be included in the final report.

The youth were very articulate about what keeps them in school. Culture, mentorship opportunities, financial and housing assistance as well as tuition and living allowances were key themes. The development of an Indigenous mentorship program will be a primary policy and practice recommendation. The need for culturally relevant curriculum in schools was also a key theme. The urban Aboriginal youth voices were articulate and engaging and highlighted what type of research they wanted in their community for their community.

**Anticipated Results:** Final Report Spring 2014

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS – RESEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE

One outcome of this conference is the connection that occurred for one of the youth (12 years old) who spoke in the video about wanting to become a Marine Biologist. Dr. Johnson subsequently met with the youth, her foster parent and a Marine Biologist employed at UBC. The UBC Science professor spent the morning with the youth and foster parent, talking about his job, what he does and what he does not do, providing a tour of the UBC Bio-Diversity Museum and answering questions. Dr. Johnson met with the youth and foster parent following the visit, debriefed the visit over lunch, took pictures of the youth interacting with other UBC professors and listened to the child's experience. Other UBC professors have offered to provide the same kind of interaction with other Indigenous children or youth in care that may be interested to learn more about a particular discipline.

## PRECARIOUS BANKING IN PRINCE GEORGE

*Dr. Paul Bowles, University of Northern British and the Aboriginal Business and Community Development Centre*

The research project seeks to understand the financial barriers faced by urban Aboriginal people and their use of urban financial institutions including banks, credit unions and payday lenders. The aim is to inform public policy on how best to meet the financial service needs of urban Aboriginal people. This data is being collected through workshops and focus groups within Urban Aboriginal settings.

**Current Stage:** Financial literacy workshops, focus groups and research are in progress. More results to follow when report is submitted.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014



# PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE PROJECTS UPDATE

The Prairie 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. Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg, Urban and Inner City Studies. The Prairie RRC executive committee is comprised of representatives from the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in the Province of Manitoba, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Saskatchewan Region and Dr. Bettina Schneider First Nations University of Canada. There are currently seven research projects funded in the Prairie Region.

## ABORIGINAL LIFE SKILLS AND FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULUM AND EDUCATION THROUGH THE NEWO YOTINA FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (NYFC)

*Professor Bettina Schneider, First Nations University of Canada and Kim Wenger, Newo Yotina Friendship Centre*

This research project's goal is to develop and adapt life skills and financial literacy curriculum that incorporates an Aboriginal worldview and culturally sensitive approach to eliminate barriers; and to provide greater opportunities and programming for urban Aboriginal peoples. A key aspect of this project includes Elder involvement in every focus group, workshop and aftercare service. The Elder provides guidance on the curriculum with activities such as prayers, smudging and teachings that are built into the curriculum. This is a community led and driven process.

### COMMUNITY IMPACTS – RESEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE

"I get to see the change it is making in the lives of participants on a daily basis"

**Kim Wenger, NYFC**

"I see a struggle everyday with the Friendship Centre clients who do not have a true understanding of how credit works .... I want people to know that if properly understood managed, money can be a positive force in their lives".

**Kim Wenger, NYFC**

**Current Stage:** Data collection through questionnaires with NYFC clientele, one on one interviews, sharing circles, focus groups, and workshops were completed. This project is currently in the final stage of the project, which is aftercare. This is a critical stage retention and outcomes are measured from participants. A final paper is in progress that will incorporate findings and much of the material identified in the literature review.

**Preliminary Results and Findings:** Anticipated results

are the reveal of much needed community programs. The results of the research are explained to be very tangible with direct change and sustainability of this project as a key goal. Current plans to attend a variety of meetings and conferences to share results are in place. Next steps in the research include applying for funding to continue more introductory Aboriginal Life Skills and Financial Literacy Classes and Workshops.

**Anticipated Results:** Spring 2014

### DEFINING FOOD SECURITY FOR URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

*Dr. Jaime Cidro and Dr. Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg; Jim Sinclair, Indian and Métis Friendship Centre*

This research project aims to explore the concept of food security from an urban Aboriginal perspective, explore the challenges of maintaining access to culturally valued food in the inner city and to make recommendations concerning food systems policy in order to meet the needs for culturally valued foods for urban Aboriginal households. This project consisted of ten interviews and three focus groups.

**Current stage:** Data collection commenced in April 2013, still ongoing until March 2014. Presentation of the results at an upcoming Regional Research Meeting is being planned.

**Preliminary Results and Findings:** Our preliminary analysis reveals the following three themes: Growing, Harvesting, Preparing and Eating Cultural Food as Ceremony, Cultural Food as a Part of Connection to Land through Reciprocity and Re-Learning Indigenous Food Sovereignty to Address Food Insecurity. The partnership provided an opportunity for the IMFC to learn about the issues facing community members in regards to food security to assist in the development of programming at the IMFC as they transition into bringing in additional programs. This research demonstrated that food is an important topic and not just related to sustenance. The literature primarily focuses on food security issues, especially in relation to cultural food within a rural, remote and reserve context, and fails to address the food security issues relating to cultural food in the city.

**Next Steps:** Findings are being used as the basis for a diabetes prevention project with youth and seniors: an inter-generational traditional food cooking series. The IMFC will hire a university student to develop a weekly cooking series that looks at "re-inventing" traditional food by modifying it with heart healthy ingredients and cooking methods. This series is connected with the work the IMFC currently does with a Seniors Group and Niji Mahkwa School in the area.

**Anticipated Results:** Summer 2014

### COMPARING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF URBAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLES WITH CANADIAN RIGHTS TO A QUALITY OF LIFE

*Dr. John G. Hansen, Dr. Isobel M. Findlay, and Dr. Joseph Garcea, University of Saskatchewan; Brad Bird, Saskatoon Urban Aboriginal Strategy; Darlene Lanceley, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies*

The research project aims to establish baseline information about Quality of Life (QoL) for urban Aboriginal peoples using the mixed-methods research approach of Community University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) QoL research iterations, integrating CUISR's collaborative community-based research approach.

**Current Stage:** Research is in progress, ethics and instrument is done, student researcher has been hired, the agreements to conduct research are complete and the steering committee identified participants. Researchers will conduct an online survey, focus groups, and in-depth face-to-face interviews with participants in selected neighbourhoods. A community forum will share results and get feedback on important themes and findings impacting policy and program development.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

### DEFINING AND RESPONDING TO ABORIGINAL HOMELESSNESS IN FLIN FLON

*Dr. Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg and Shelley Craig, Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre*

This research project will attempt to obtain information about the characteristics and experiences of the homeless population in Flin Flon. Manitoba with the goal of identifying possible policy responses to their needs. The objective of this study is to help the Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre document the characteristics of and needs of the homeless Aboriginal population in Flin Flon; to build research capacity by developing appropriate methods and instruments for studying the characteristics and dynamics of homeless Aboriginal people in small northern communities; to develop recommendations for policy responses, and to communicate results to a variety of relevant audiences.

**Current stage:** Data has been collected through interviews with homeless people and organizations, conducted by a community researcher selected by the Friendship Centre and will be analyzed. Research results will be captured in a final report.

**Anticipated Results:** Summer 2014

### LEARNING TOGETHER: STR8UP, OSKAYAK HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

*Dr. Nancy Van Styvendale, University of Saskatchewan; Stan Tu'Inukafe, Str8Up; Oskayak High School, Catholic High School Division; Saskatoon, SK*

This project builds on the recently completed pilot project “Inside Out on the Outside,” an educational initiative which brought together former gang members from Str8Up, “non-traditional” learners from Oskayak High School, and students from the University of Saskatchewan. The current project continues this work, offering the course again and researching its effects on all participants—students, community partners and instructors.

**Current Stage:** This project is in the halfway stage in implementing this year’s class (began January and will end in April 2014). Individual interviews with participants and data collection will commence in April. Research results will be disseminated through a student-created art installation, as well as a conference presentation and co-written article. This research will allow us to advance recommendations (e.g. for providing university credit to participating Str8Up and Oskayak students) that will change university practice and have direct bearing on Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with the university.

**Anticipated Results:** Summer 2014

#### RESEARCH FOR THIS PROJECT WAS BASED ON THIS KEY CONCEPT

“Aboriginal people have described with words reflecting ancient knowledge for community life, well-being and sharing values,” as Priscilla Settee explains. “In the Cree language this is called *pimatissiwian*. It is taken from the root word *pimatisi*: to be alive. A core value is *miyo-wechehtowin*, which means having good relations. Individually and collectively, people have been instructed by their teachings since time immemorial to strive and conduct themselves in ways that create positive relationships.”

*Priscilla Settee, University of Saskatchewan*

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS – RESEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE

“Our hope is that university classes will become more accessible, particularly to those who have historically been marginalized and excluded from University. We are especially concerned with increasing access for people who are incarcerated and encouraging Indigenous student retention.”

Dr. Nancy Van Styvendale,  
University of Saskatchewan

## AN EXPLORATION OF ADDICTIONS RECOVERY AMONG ABORIGINAL PEOPLES WHO UTILIZE THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE IN SASKATOON: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALING

*John Hansen, University of Saskatchewan, and Gwen Bear, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan*

The study aims to develop our understanding of ‘How chemically dependent Aboriginal people recover from addictions’ using qualitative research methodologies.

This research projects seeks to explore questions that look at the important factors that lead to addictions recovery from the perspective of Aboriginal people who utilize Friendship Centres. Anticipated results of the research relates to the need and experiences of urban Aboriginal people within Saskatoon that have completed or are currently in recovery.

**Current Status:** The researcher has interviewed and transcribed the data from the interviews; and developed a literature review. Co-authored article was submitted to academic journal.

**Anticipated Results:** Summer - Fall 2014

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

“Our hope is to continue to develop on collaborative efforts in ongoing work on Aboriginal social justice, healing initiatives and Aboriginal community justice models; connecting with other long-term relationships with, for example the Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre.”

Dr. John Hansen, University of Saskatchewan

# CENTRAL RESEARCH CIRCLE PROJECTS UPDATE

---

The Central Research Circle (RRC) is based out of Trent University 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 Indian Friendship Centres and Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre. There are currently 3 funded research projects in the Central Region and a youth engagement forum.

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX AND BRINGING RESEARCH INSIDE THE CIRCLE: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IN AN ABORIGINAL RESEARCH CONTEXT

*Wendy Phillips, Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre and Mark Dockstator, Trent University*

At the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre all of their work has roots in Indigenous worldviews and teachings. This research project aims to look at Aboriginal research from a “back to basics” research approach, taking the current research model and reversing it, by focusing on an Indigenous process.

**Current Stage:** This project is in the beginning stages. There will be two major outcomes of this project to be presented back to community, one being a report that will be written to address the defined research questions. A graduate student will work with each

of the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers to determine their views on Indigenous Research, compile the results and produce a written report and secondly, students will prepare papers/videos/art work/etc. based on their experiences and the outcome(s) of the project.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

## URBAN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY BUILDING AND THE BASIS OF ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN SUDBURY

*Dr. Kevin FitzMaurice, University of Sudbury; KINXUS; Nancy Recollet, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and Christine Rego, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Northern Aboriginal Services*

This research idea comes directly from the KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources ‘212’ Economic Success Initiative. In proposing to explore the experiences of economic success and the pathways to Aboriginal community life in Sudbury, this research is intended to directly support the KINXUS ‘212’ initiative, which is aimed at better understanding the emerging middle class of Aboriginal professionals in Sudbury and supporting their continued success as well as engagement with the wider Aboriginal community.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

### 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 and Karen Peterson*

The purpose of this research project is to create awareness about the economic impact of Aboriginal people to Thunder Bay's economy and build community capacity to create a welcoming urban environment for sustainability. The expected outcome is an increased appreciation for the changing dynamic of the Aboriginal economy with the ultimate goal to influence policy in terms of capacity building to create a supportive urban environment and foster economic linkages between the rural and urban communities.

**Current Stage:** This project is at the beginning stage currently developing terms of reference for a steering committee, hiring a student researcher, develop surveys and begin engagement. This project will be conducted in two phases. This proposal pertains to Phase One which is the data collection phase, building community capacity and creating awareness about Aboriginal people's economic impact.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

# ABORIGINAL YOUTH-DRIVEN RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Where we have come from and where we are going

---

This **youth-driven research symposium** was held in conjunction with the OFIFC youth forum in Toronto, Ontario. The process was led and facilitated by the youth to define and present youth research priorities. The youth chose to utilize the Medicine Wheel in order to workshop their research priorities with the symposium participants.







## Attitudes

*Attitudes: The importance of creating a healthy community through balance, cultural knowledge and community connections*

- Aboriginal youth sexuality from a traditional teachings perspective
- Youth addictions and mental health issues and connections to traditional teachings
- Strengthen relationships between youth and Elders
- Healthy expressions of emotions and experiences from a cultural perspective



## Values

*Values: Research as a tool to engage youth and communities*

- Youth barriers to accessing services
- Effective youth engagement strategies
- Aboriginal youth leadership sustainability beyond the youth years
- Being attentive to diverse youth needs and interests



## Knowledge

*Knowledge: The role of research in strengthening educational outcomes and experiences of urban Aboriginal youth*

- Impacts of educational trauma on urban Aboriginal learners
- Friendship Centres involvement in teacher education
- Developing stronger communications between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations
- Accountability of teachers and education boards to urban Aboriginal students and families
- Urban Aboriginal youth perspective of student success and Friendship Centres role
- Involvement of Elders
- Best Practices in education for urban Aboriginal communities



## Skills

*Skills: research in the area of skill acquisition and relation to community and cultural/traditional knowledge*

- High school credits related to traditional medicines
- Youth perceptions on participation in the business sector
- Cultural knowledge and language sustainability
- Environmental impacts faced by youth and future implications for community relationships, employment, education, etc.
- Culturally based sustainable approaches to apprenticeships and co-ops
- Availability and needs of children and youth regarding child care centres in Friendship Centres
- Youth and Elder relationship strengthening

# ATLANTIC RESEARCH CENTRE PROJECT UPDATES

The Atlantic Research Centre (RRC) is based out of the University of New Brunswick led by the RRC Director Dr. Verlé Harrop, Faculty of Education. The Executive committee of the Atlantic RRC includes representatives from: New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC); St. John's Native Friendship Centre; Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; Native Council of PEI; Under One Sky Head Start; Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour, Government of New Brunswick; Steven Foulds, Law Office, Fredericton; Social Development, Government of New Brunswick; Lisa Jodoin, UNB; and Jula Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB. There are currently three research projects funded in the Atlantic Region.

## NAVIGATING GOVERNMENT SERVICES: THE "LIVED EXPERIENCE" OF YOUNG URBAN ABORIGINAL FAMILIES RESIDING IN FREDERICTON, NB

*Lisa Jodoin, University of New Brunswick and Patsy McKinney, Under One Sky Head Start*

This research project documents the experiences of young urban Aboriginal families, the working relationship between organizations, how jurisdiction affects access to services, and if the difference in rules, eligibility, and services are easily distinguished and understood. Understanding this population's

"lived experience" will enable us to better inform social services, as well as health, education, and justice policies, programs, and practices.

**Current Stages:** This project is currently in the stage of collecting data through a mixed methodology containing focus groups, individual interviews as well as some quantitative studies of the past six years of Under One Sky's data on urban Aboriginal families in Fredericton.

**Anticipated Results:** Summer 2014

## URBAN ABORIGINAL WELLBEING, 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, St. Francis Xavier University;  
Pamela Glode-Desrochers, Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre*

The Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre wishes to undertake capacity building research to assess its roles in the social developmental determinants of mental resilience and wellbeing for urban Indigenous populations in Halifax. The purpose of the research is to conduct a culturally relevant needs assessment in order to understand the characteristics of resilient communities

that foster wellbeing and to facilitate and promote the creation of Indigenous frameworks and tools for mental resilience assessments and treatments for urban Indigenous populations.

**Current stage:** The field-based work for this project has been completed. Data analysis is being conducted to feed into the final project report.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

### FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL LEARNERS ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

*Jane P. Preston, University of PEI; Carolyn Taylor, Native Council of PEI; Darrell DesRoches, Provincial Department of Education; and Alanna Taylor, Cox and Palmer Law*

This research project aims to address the lack of accurate information pertaining to the successes, challenges, and needs of off-reserve Aboriginal learners in Prince Edward Island (PEI). Although 1,730 of the population of PEI self-identifies as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, (Statistics Canada, 2010), about seven of ten Aboriginal people on PEI resides off-reserve (Statistics Canada, 2006).

This study is about Aboriginal research by and with Aboriginal peoples; thus, they strive to have an Aboriginal graduate student involved with every aspect of the research, and the graduate student's research experience will be one of apprenticeship. The research also includes an Elder to advise and assist during the creation of the research instruments, data collection, and data analysis. They plan to disseminate the result of this study through a workshop entitled, Pathway Forward.

**Current Stage:** Data for this research was collected through 18 individual interviews and 8 focus group interviews. Interview transcripts have been completed and the beginning stages of data analysis have begun for the final project report.

**Anticipated Results:** Fall 2014

# THE UAKN – KEEPING THE RESEARCH CIRCLE STRONG

---

In summary, many of the UAKN research projects are in the final wrap up stage with anticipated research results and findings to be released in final reports and/or papers in the Summer/Fall of 2014. All the RRC projects connect to one or all of the 4 UAKN research themes of human development, social cohesion, economic development and civic engagement.

All the current research projects are diverse and address the unique needs of the urban Aboriginal population in their region. Examples of this can be seen by the direct community driven research that is taking place and the impacts it has on the communities involved. We have seen this through the current research status updates conducted.

Some of the resources and tools being created out of the UAKN research are the Aboriginal Life Skills and Financial Literacy Classes, workshops and resources, an Aboriginal youth led Video Resource that highlights ‘what or who could make you want to stay in school?’, research dissemination through a public art installation, three culturally based physical activity resources for children, a current non-credit University class developed on the topic of justice open to community members and academics, a course titled: The “Learning Together” which will be held at a local community centre, and will engage at-risk youth and former gang members looking to better their lives and much more to be shared as the projects complete. The UAKN Secretariat will also lead the dissemination

of final reports, final papers, journal articles and conference presentations that are submitted by the Regional Research Centres.



The above examples highlight that through the UAKN, not just research is taking place rather a reciprocal relationship is occurring. The resources and research results created have the possibilities of being useful to a number of peoples and communities including: other Aboriginal communities, students, Aboriginal organizations, universities, governments and mainstream organizations to affect policy and change.

All RRC projects highlight the community driven nature of the projects. Most focus groups and other data collection methods encompass Aboriginal cultures and worldviews and involve Aboriginal Elder’s that bring forth ceremony, traditional knowledge and a culturally safe place for participants. Community engagement has taken place through Aboriginal talking circles, traditional feasts, interviews, online surveys, workshops, focus groups and community forums.

The UAKN’s success is built on the foundation of creating and maintaining partnerships. This includes partnerships with urban Aboriginal communities and organizations, academic institutions, government partners and service providers. The UAKN intends to continue to connect and engage current and new partners, communities and those who are interested in community driven research and “research for a better life” for urban Aboriginal peoples and communities.

# STAYING CONNECTED TO THE UAKN

There are many ways to stay connected and get involved with the UAKN. The UAKN Secretariat developed and launched a website ([uakn.org](http://uakn.org)) devoted to the UAKN partners, reporting on research and knowledge mobilization. The website is a key tool to mobilize the knowledge gained by the research projects. The website is also utilized as the source to launch calls for research proposals.

A new way that the UAKN stays connected with partners is with the UAKN Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Facebook Page  ([facebook.com/TheUAKN](https://www.facebook.com/TheUAKN)) and the UAKN Twitter account  ([twitter.com/TheUAKN](https://twitter.com/TheUAKN)). We post the latest information relevant to community driven research, research related resources, conferences, events and of course research results. Connect with us online today to stay informed!

## To subscribe to our UAKN E-Newsletter

Please email [jrankin@nafc.ca](mailto:jrankin@nafc.ca)

## For More Information

### Pamela Quart

Director,  
UAKN Secretariat  
[pouart@nafc.ca](mailto:pouart@nafc.ca)

### Jennifer Rankin

Research Officer,  
UAKN Secretariat  
[jrankin@nafc.ca](mailto:jrankin@nafc.ca)

## UAKN Secretariat @the National Association of Friendship Centres

275 MacLaren Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0L9  
613.563.4844 | [uakn.org](http://uakn.org)









UAKN | RCAU  
Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network | Réseau de connaissances des Autochtones en milieu urbain