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Urban Aboriginal
Knowledge Network

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Réseau de connaissances des
Autochtones en milieu urbain

2014-2015

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-4

OVERVIEW

5-14

WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE

15-23

PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE

24-29

CENTRAL RESEARCH CIRCLE

30-38

ATLANTIC RESEARCH CENTRE

39

UAKN NATIONAL PROJECT

OVERVIEW

OF THE URBAN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

The UAKN is a research network of urban Aboriginal communities, policy makers and academics, engaging in community driven research with the goal of contributing to a better quality of life for urban Aboriginal people. There are currently 20 research projects taking place across the regions, with 10 final papers.

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.



UAKN Principle Investigator, Professor David Newhouse at the UAKN Atlantic Knowledge Mobilization Workshop and Regional Research Symposium May 15-16, 2014

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 Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the UAKN is poised to work collaboratively and ensures Aboriginal research is led by the community, for the community.

The success of the UAKN's national network is built on a different kind of partnership by developing stronger relationships, through a community driven process. The UAKN would not be possible without leadership and support from communities. We currently have over 80 formal partners. As the UAKN moves forward we hope to continue creating these partnerships, both formal and informal.

“There has been over the last 40 years an incredible series of urban Aboriginal institutions that help to improve the quality of life, there are alternative schools, school programs, health programs, health institutions in the city and Friendship Centres ... Friendship Centres serve as cultural centres, advocates for Aboriginal people and services, they have been the site for Aboriginal businesses and they have been the entry point for many people coming into the city and that institutional framework has been very helpful in helping people to live well in the city. We have a 2.5 million research grant from SSHRC to explore how Aboriginal people are creating good lives in the city, we are trying to figure out what works, what doesn’t and how do we improve the institutional infrastructure that has been built up.”

UAKN Secretariat Update



UAKN Network Council Meeting, Ottawa 2014

Knowledge Mobilization remains the focus of the UAKN Secretariat. The Secretariat unveiled an updated website: www.uakn.org, which highlights each of the projects and various statistics, as well as UAKN events, and information from each of the Regional Research Centres (RRCs). Also on the website are newsletters, brochures and last year’s summary of research.

The UAKN has an innovative governance structure that includes the Aboriginal Circle and Network Council, who both met in November 2014. The Circle focused on discussions about ownership and intellectual property rights in community driven research and key research priorities for the Network Council. The Network Council gathered to provide regional updates to one another, discuss knowledge mobilization activities, implementation of national research projects and future national research projects and direction.

Regional Research Centres



A

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

B

Prairie Research Centre,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, SK

C

Central Research Circle,
Trent University,
Peterborough, ON

D

Atlantic Research Centre,
University of New Brunswick,
Fredericton, NB

UAKN Regional Research Centres

The UAKN research is funded through the Social Sciences and Human Resource Council (SSHRC). The funds flow through four Regional Research Centres (RRCs):

A Western Research Centre based out of University of Northern British Columbia;

A Prairie Research Centre based out of the 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.

The Regional Research Centres connect community members, policy makers, regional universities and researchers from a cross-section of academic disciplines along with other stakeholders to engage in community driven research.

A priority area of the UAKN is to ensure training of new and emerging scholars, especially Aboriginal scholars who are focal to the research. To date 45 graduate and undergraduate students have been involved in various capacities. The UAKN also supports communities as they build their own research capacity through this process. We look forward to more opportunities to expand our network as we move forward.

UAKN RESEARCH THEMES

1

Human Development:
needs and outcomes of
individuals and families;

2

Social Cohesion:
community well-being,
education and justice;

3

Economic Development:
economic participation,
education & skills
development, employment,
entrepreneurship, income.

4

Civic Engagement:
Urban Aboriginal
councils and/or urban
Aboriginal community
organizations role in
the city and with other
local organizations.

WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE



The Western Research Centre is based out of the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) 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 9 projects funded in the Western Region.

In October 2014, the Western Region hosted a one-day symposium to share preliminary results of research projects funded by the UAKN.

“Although more than half of Canada’s Aboriginals live in urban centres, the realities of urban Aboriginal people remain much less understood by researchers, government officials, and many service agencies than those of on-reserve First Nations people and Inuit in the North,” says UNBC professor of First Nations Studies Ross Hoffman, who along with UNBC Economics professor Paul Bowles, will be coordinating UNBC’s research activities in the project ... This is the first time universities, government ministries, and friendship centres have ever been brought together at the national level to address issues of aboriginal policy.”

Western Research Centre Project Updates

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; Victoria Native Friendship Centre; Island Metis Family & Community Services Society; WSANEC School Board.

This research project collaborated with urban Aboriginal organizations and urban Aboriginal individuals working in 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 community driven project first started out as an opportunity to build resources for young Aboriginal children to develop gross motor skills but then became a project that developed culturally relevant resources to promote and support education on physical activity, literacy and art components.

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 created met a strong need brought forth from the urban Aboriginal communities.
- Community led process that is rooted in culture and practice is a key determinate of success for developing physical activity resources.
- Meetings taking place in the community, and face-to-face, was also an important factor in adding strength and meaning to the process.
- The impacts were in terms of community investment, ownership, strengthened relationships and collaboration, personal and creative impacts that were described as visionary.

Two resources were created out of this project in partnership with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) who developed a resource based on an animal theme, titled *Let's Move with Bear*

& His Friends, building on previous cultural language and literacy booklets developed by the Friendship Centre.



The Island Métis Family and Community Services Society (IMFCSS) developed a resource based on the iconic Métis Red River Cart story. The cultural resource (with physical activity, literacy and art activities) that was developed is titled *The Journey of the Métis Red River Cart*.

Two large local training sessions were scheduled for February and March 2015. These sessions are open to people working with young children including parents, early childhood educators, teachers, grandparents, foster parents and interested partners.

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Precarious Banking in Prince George

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

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.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:

Individuals in focus groups identified high levels of basic financial literacy. All individuals had bank accounts; some also

used fringe financial institutions such as payday loan stores. This was due to convenience factors and the inability to secure loans from banks. *Financial literacy plus* programs, which address low income, are likely to be more effective.

CURRENT STAGE:

Financial literacy workshops, focus groups and research are now complete. The research paper has been submitted to a journal and a submission to a national consultation process has been made with ABDC was made to the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada as part of the consultation process in response to *Toward a National Strategy for Financial Literacy, Phase 2: Priority Groups*.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

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; Broadway Youth Resource Centre

This research project addressed the question, *what or who could make you want to stay in school?* The objective was to identify strategies that could improve the educational success of urban Aboriginal youth in foster care. This was a participatory-based action research project in which each of three youth groups independently decided on the medium they used to respond to the research question.

On October 18, 2013, Aboriginal youth presented their responses at a one-day conference at the University of British Columbia and together with 50 adults in attendance, worked to develop strategies and recommendations

A conference was held on October 18, 2014 at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) funded by SSHRC and the UAKN Western Region Research Centre.

In this video we hear from conference participants and Indigenous youth on strategies to improve education for urban Aboriginal Youth.

Link to video: bit.ly/1lvYHAC

based on the youth responses. Out of this conference, a 22-minute professional grade video was produced. The video is owned by the youth, therefore the youth have the decision-making authority to determine how they wish it disseminated. Also at the conference, written data provided by research participants was collected and this is currently being analyzed by the researchers to be included in the final report.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- The policy and practice connection between Indigenous youth in BC's foster care system currently in the K-12 system, their teachers and administrators, and the provincial post secondary educational system must be stronger.
- Opportunities must exist for children as young as 12 years old to be exposed to post secondary

programs, campus sites, instructors, and professors working in faculties that are reflective of the student's interests. Indigenous children in foster care must be aware of post secondary institutions in BC that offer tuition waivers (or have this policy) to support post secondary education.

CURRENT STAGE

The written data is being analyzed by the researchers and a paper will be submitted for publication.

NEXT STEPS

The Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services and Professor Johnson of UBC are hoping to continue their research partnership with a project focusing on Restorative Child Welfare Practices at VACFSS.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT 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 research project is a community-based research project that furthers research and insights gained from the previously completed research project entitled Kindergarten Transitions I, completed in 2013. The initial project identified challenges affecting the successful transition of Aboriginal children from early childhood settings into kindergarten. It recommended ways of supporting young children during the transition process. The current Kindergarten Transitions II project sought to further expand knowledge of existing programs in British Columbia that are supporting early childhood transitions. The purpose of the study was to determine the elements of successful working partnerships between childhood settings and kindergarten and primary schools. It also sought to identify important aspects of building working relationships across systems and cultures

KEY FINDINGS

It has been 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.
- 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 form a strong foundation for holistic child development.
- Family-centered approaches in all aspects of programs including: outreach, planning, program delivery and assessment/evaluation are key to success.
- Formalizing the above *learnings* in program/school policy will ensure more continuity.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Interest from *Transitions II* as part of this larger plan has increased the profile and reach of this community project in which there has been engagement with Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District. One of the outcomes has been the delivery of a summer pre-kindergarten pilot project that was funded by the School District, Tillicum Lelum and the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. Funding is in place for the second project to be delivered in July 2015.

“This program has already begun to transform the School District’s understanding of Aboriginal children and the importance of integrating what is known about the culture and language of the First Nations communities and Aboriginal agencies into children’s earliest experiences.”

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Prince George Protocol Development

Dr. Michael John Evans, University of British Columbia (UBC); Barb Ward-Burkitt, Executive Director, Prince George Native Friendship Centre; Central Interior Native Health Society; Positive Living North.

This project is an outcome of the ongoing dialogue with and between urban Aboriginal organizations in Prince George and university-based researchers from the UNBC and UBC about the research goals and capacity needs in the urban Aboriginal community generally. A clear need has 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.

Building on the strengths of the urban Aboriginal community this project aims to develop research protocols that will in turn, facilitate developing and enacting a

shared research agenda this strengthening community capacity to engage in research with the university and external collaborators across all themes identified by the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network's Western Research Centre.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

This project has been invaluable in terms of building research capacity for urban Aboriginal organizations in Prince George. Each organization has developed a unique set of protocols tailored to their organization. The opportunity to collaborate among the organizations has strengthened research knowledge and confidence as well as strengthened existing relationships. Three distinct research protocols documents will be developed out of this project.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT 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 will take place in the interior region of British Columbia through a community-university partnership between the Interior Indian Friendship Society and Thompson Rivers University, both of which are located on the traditional territories of the Secwepemc peoples in the city of Kamloops.

This research proposal has been developed in ongoing dialogue between community and academic researchers. It has been informed by previous and ongoing research conducted by the applicants.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

RESEARCH GOALS

1

To advance the understanding of how urban Aboriginal youth who identify as homeless or at risk of homelessness identify their health needs within an Indigenous intersectional model of health and wellness.

2

To contribute to new understandings and knowledge of Indigenous urban youth and research capacity among urban Aboriginal youth and urban Aboriginal health-care providers. A key focus will be the development of strategies for addressing the aspirations of urban Aboriginal youth, laying the foundations upon which their health and wellness potential can be nurtured, supported, and realized.

Aboriginal Youth-Powered Documentaries

ON PATHWAYS INTO AND OUT OF HOMELESSNESS
FOLLOWING SOUTHERN ALBERTA’S 2013 FLOOD

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; and LeeAnne Ireland, Executive Director, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

This project seeks to understand what are pathways into and out of homelessness among Aboriginal youth in diverse conditions of housing insecurity in southern Alberta. This research project will engage homeless Aboriginal youth to participate in documentary film-making workshops as co-researchers encouraged to overcome barriers through guidance from their communities. Four short films on housing insecurity experienced by Aboriginal youth will be written, interviewed, shot, and edited in small groups, as the voices of many more will appear in films and articles.

This research seeks to validate the identities of marginalized youth by recognizing how structural violence is defined, understood, and experienced in different contexts by at-risk Aboriginal youth (e.g. involvement in child welfare system; extended time in shelters); engage experiential wisdom and strategies embedded in local and indigenous ways of knowing for coping with colonialism and rapid social change; and expand the analytical and technological skills of high-risk youth through creative media.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

A Review of the Literature

AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF URBAN ABORIGINAL
HEALING AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES IN CANADA

**Dr. Ross Hoffman, University of Northern British Columbia and
Jessie King, PhD Candidate**

This research project is comprised of a literature review and an environmental scan. The purpose of the literature review is to gain a clear sense of 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 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. The research question asks, *How are Aboriginal people seeking out healing in an urban context?*

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Primary themes found in the literature were:

- Traditional healing and western health care are for the most part complementary – people tend to use both.
- 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.

It was difficult to find research that was conducted in urban contexts only. In some cases it is difficult to define *urban*.

More urban specific research in urban contexts needs to take place.

CURRENT STAGE

This project is currently ongoing.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG

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

Research final report is in progress.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE



The Prairie Research Centre 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, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Saskatchewan Region and Dr. Bettina Schneider First Nations University of Canada. There are currently 6 funded projects from the Prairie region with 6 corresponding final papers. All the research results are available on the UAKN website.

The Prairie Region took part in a variety of knowledge mobilization activities; a larger event hosted by the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) titled, the *Quality of Life: Towards Sustainable Community Futures* conference at the University of Saskatchewan took place in May 2014. Several UAKN projects were featured in panels and workshops on a diverse range of projects taking place highlighted topics such as homelessness, Indigenous planning in the city, quality of life, food security, Aboriginal life skills, education and much more.

"Research questions come directly from communities to ensure that their voices are heard."
UAKN Secretariat Director Pamela Quart

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 was to develop and adapt life skills and financial literacy curriculum that incorporates an Aboriginal world view and culturally sensitive approach to eliminate barriers; and to provide a greater opportunities and programming for urban Aboriginal peoples. Literature shows that many urban Aboriginal people face significant barriers to financial literacy and economic well-being.

KEY FINDINGS

- This research concurs with the assessment that Aboriginal people face barriers to economic well-being and found that individually tailored, culturally appropriate approaches within workshops and aftercare services is critical in addressing the needs for Newo Yotina Friendship Centre clients.

- Focus groups revealed there is a need to focus on addictions counselling in the life skills curriculum.
- There is a need to develop stronger partnerships with the Ministry of Social Services and other community partners in delivering these types of workshops.

Based on the findings a more one-on-one and tailored approach within the workshop and the aftercare services are critical in addressing the varying circumstances that many NYFC clients are facing. Unanticipated findings of this project that emerged was the significant role of addictions in terms of clients’ financial problems, a large majority of participants were suffering from various addictions. Aboriginal Life Skills and Financial Literacy curriculum was developed from this project, which consists of eight modules and a lesson plan.

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Defining Food Security For Urban Aboriginal People

Dr. Jaime Cidro, University of Winnipeg, Dr. Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg, Jim Sinclair, Executive Director, Indian and Metis Friendship Centre

This research project explored the concept of food security from an urban Aboriginal perspective, explored the challenges of maintaining access to culturally valued food in the inner city and made recommendations concerning food systems policy in order to meet the needs for culturally valued foods for urban Aboriginal households.

KEY FINDINGS

- 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 connection to 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.

Various policy recommendations were brought forth from this study on creating access, knowledge and understanding on what food security means for urban Aboriginal people.

NEXT STEPS

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 project will seek to expand its network of partners, develop curriculum and to continue to make policy recommendations that can be used at regional level.



Defining Food Security for Urban Aboriginal people, *Fishing in the City* Workshop Participants, 2014 Photo credit: Jesse Vanderhart

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Community Impacts – Meeting Community Needs
As one respondent said in the focus group: “I’ve been trying to eat, to live healthier and go back and to live a good life so glad I join this, when I heard about this I was like ‘Yes, sign me up!’”
– Focus group participant

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

This study examined the lived experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples in relation to quality of life (QoL) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 2013-14. The major findings of this research are that discrimination, the legacies of residential schools, and social problems marginalized urban Aboriginal people, decreased social inclusion, and even alienated them from their own culture and traditional teachings and adversely affected QoL. Largely because of these factors, as few as 6-11% reported their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as excellent.

KEY FINDINGS

- Despite government recognition of the importance of improving QoL, significant barriers remain for Aboriginal peoples.
- 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 one's culture and traditional teachings adversely affected one's QoL.

- Survey results revealed in this study show that 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 QoL 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%).

NEXT STEPS

This research team is seeking to secure additional an SSHRC Partnership grant to build on these partnerships and knowledge mobilization activities in ongoing work on quality of life, Aboriginal justice, and community economic development.

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

DEFINING AND RESPONDING TO Aboriginal Homelessness in Flin Flon

Dr. Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg and Shelley Craig, Executive Director, Flin Flon Friendship Centre

This research project examined and studied the characteristics and experiences of the homeless population in Flin Flon, Manitoba. Research results identified several policy recommendations to meet the needs of the Aboriginal homeless population. 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).

KEY FINDINGS

- 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 in homelessness in Flin Flon, 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 determinants of homelessness with other homeless populations, however they experience additional unique factors stemming from colonial histories.

Research revealed that a multi-service approach that is culturally relevant is needed with strong partnerships between organizations and communities to address Aboriginal homelessness. Several policy recommendations from this research were brought forth and look at key themes of creating better access to services and programs, creating culturally relevant services and programs, addressing chronic conditions, addressing the youth population and creating strong partnerships with community members, service organizations and government.

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Learning Together

STR8UP, OSKAYAK HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

This project built upon the 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 *Learning Together* project offered a similar course from the pilot project and researched its effect on the participants involved including students, community partners and instructors. All students were brought together in a thirteen-week

course on topics of justice. 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.

This research will allow advancement in policy recommendations that address urban Aboriginal education and training. This project is unique in the way it structures its course and how it provides a university credit to participating Str8Up and Oskayak students. This structure changes university practice and has a direct bearing on Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with the university.



Sarah Buhler, Priscilla Settee, Stan Tu’Inukuafe, Nancy Van Styvendale

What happens when the *ivory tower* comes to the *hood*?

STR8 UP was a key part of an innovative, interdisciplinary class studying justice which was held twice in the core community of Saskatoon. Three faculty members from the University of Saskatchewan and Stan Tu’Inukuafe from Oskayak High School (and STR8-UP) brought together students from Oskayak, University of Saskatchewan, and members of STR8-UP in a project guided by *Wah-kohtowin* which means *kinship* in Cree.

str8-up.ca/project/teaching-and-learning-about-justice-through-wahkohtowin/

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 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.
- THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

A Holistic Approach to Healing

Dr. John Hansen, University of Saskatchewan; Gwen Bear, Executive Director Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan; Nicole Callihoo, Johnson Shoyoma Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan

The study examined the question of *How chemically dependent Aboriginal people recover from addictions* using qualitative research methodologies. This research project explored the important factors that lead to addictions recovery from the perspective of Aboriginal people who utilize Friendship Centres.

This study reveals that 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.



Jim Sinclair, Executive Director, Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg; and Dr. John Hansen, Professor University of Saskatchewan

KEY FINDINGS

- 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. More specifically, Friendship Centres require access to resources to increase their ability to provide these essential services, like cultural and traditional programming.
- Healing factors mentioned by participants were having children, family support, counselling, 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 is some strong linkages that need to be further examined between incarceration rates and addictions treatment.

This research study followed with recommendations aimed to improve response and prevention when addressing addictions to the urban Aboriginal population looking at increasing support for 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. Key findings in this study also include recommendations 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 have proven to be successful.

THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

CENTRAL RESEARCH CIRCLE



The Central Research Circle 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 Indigenous Friendship Centres and Regroupment Des Centres D'Amitie Autochtones du Quebec. There are currently 6 funded research projects and a youth symposium in the Central Region.

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

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. This research project aims to explore the process of research in an urban Aboriginal organization in Peterborough using an Indigenous medicine wheel approach to conduct research where students and Elders and/or traditional knowledge holders can create stronger relationships and further develop research questions and priorities. This project conducted this through four, three-day cultural workshops where students and Elders decided together on the nature of their actions on how the research will be carried out.

CURRENT STATUS

This research has been completed and the final report is being prepared. There will be two major outcomes of this project to be presented back to the community, one being a report that will be written to address the defined research questions and another will be the work of a graduate student that will work with each of the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers to determine their views on Indigenous Research.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Urban Aboriginal Community Building

AND THE BASIS OF ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN SUDBURY

Dr. Kevin FitzMaurice (University of Sudbury, Indigenous Studies – KINXUS); Nancy Recollet (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration); 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. 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 the heart of this 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?

CURRENT STATUS

This research has been completed and a final report is being prepared.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT 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 and Karen Peterson

The purpose of this 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. This project was conducted in two phases. Currently being conducted, Phase One is the data collection phase, building community capacity and creating awareness about Aboriginal people's economic impact. Then will lead into, Phase Two aimed at creating a supportive urban environment by influencing policy to enhance the participation rate of Aboriginal peoples employment and economic development by foster economic linkages between urban and rural communities for urban sustainability and mutual benefit.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The Aboriginal population continues to increase and continues to be a significant part of the urban landscape contributing to Thunder Bay's economy as customers, clients and property taxes through capital investments. The Aboriginal population contributes approximately 11% to Thunder

Bay's GDP which provides a significant contribution which provides employment opportunities for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. The total purchasing power of population both in Thunder Bay and in the region contributes to all economic sectors and a continued growth is expected as well as the population continues to grow, education levels continue to increase as well as labor force participation rates coupled with resource development in the region and capacity building in communities. Another actor revealed that approximately 92% of respondents indicate they believe racism exists in Thunder Bay.

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 STATUS

This research is in final stages.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Aboriginal Youth Driven Research Symposium

WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres - OFIFC.

A youth-driven research symposium was held in conjunction with the OFIFC youth forum in Toronto, Ontario in October 2013. 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. A one pager with the key findings was created and is available on the UAKN website.

KEY FINDINGS

- Values: Research as a tool to engage youth and communities.
- Skills: Research in the area of skill acquisition and relation to community and cultural/traditional knowledge.
- Knowledge: The role of research in strengthening educational outcomes and experiences of urban Aboriginal youth.
- Attitudes: The importance of creating a healthy community through balance, cultural knowledge, and community connections.



THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETE, THE FINAL PAPER CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

HISTORY PROJECT

Where Have We Come From?

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and Dr. Don McCaskill, Trent University

Though research concerning urban Aboriginal communities has been expanding recently, there remains a gap in understanding of the historical experiences of these communities. Urban centres formed due to the presence of and in conjunction with Aboriginal communities, yet there are no significant histories of urban Aboriginal

communities in any city across Canada. This research project will document the histories of two urban centres in Ontario. The long-standing Aboriginal communities in Sudbury and Ottawa will be examined.

CURRENT STATUS

Archival research is underway and community interviews are being set up.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Where Are We Now?

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres - OFIFC

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 wise practices in the following urban areas: Peel, Niagara, Hamilton, and London.

Another focus of this project is to consider the growth and expansion of urban Indigenous communities within these regions.

CURRENT STATUS

This project is in the early stages, with research anticipated to start in Spring 2015.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION.

YOUTH PROJECT

Where Are We Going?

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres - OFIFC

This youth project will engage the OFIFC Aboriginal Youth Council representatives as well as the four youth from the newly formed OFIFC regional structure (North-east, Northwest, Southeast, and South-west) and will be coordinated by OFIFC staff (Research Director, Researchers, and Urban Aboriginal Community Activators). The focus of this project is to document the stories and experiences of diverse urban Aboriginal youth and identify wise practices that have facilitated in the cultivation of leadership skills. In addition, the youth will examine what elements of youth

leadership are necessary in the future and suggest ways these can be strengthened. The connections to traditional knowledge and the intersections of gender will be important parts of this research. The youth project will produce a best practices guide for urban Aboriginal youth engagement that will outline some of the lessons learned throughout the research.

CURRENT STATUS

Currently, youth are being recruited to help develop the project and planning. A workshop is planned for July of 2015.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION.

ATLANTIC RESEARCH CENTRE



The Atlantic Research Centre is based out of the University of New Brunswick led by ARC Director Dr. Verl  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; urban Aboriginal Elder; Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour, Government of New Brunswick; Steven Foulds, Law Office, Fredericton; Social Development, Government of New Brunswick; emerging urban Aboriginal scholar; and Faculty of Law, UNB. There are currently 9 funded research projects in the Atlantic Region.

There have been several knowledge mobilization activities, which included a series of workshops and meet and greets hosted to engage researchers, academics, student researchers and community members to talk about community driven research and the needs of Aboriginal communities in the Atlantic region with the focus on building partnerships.

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

This research project examines 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 data analysis.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG

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 Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Communities Chair and Associate Professor **St. Francis Xavier University, Pamela Glode-Desrochers** Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre Halifax

The Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre undertook 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 was 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.

This research was undertaken to assist the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) in responding more effectively to the mental resilience, wellbeing and justice needs of the urban Indigenous populations they serve. The findings enhance the MNFC's ability to deliver vital navigational tools for beneficiaries of mental resilience, wellness and addictions programs and help build the cultural competency/safety capacity of non-Indigenous service providers in assisting Indigenous clients in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

KEY FINDINGS

- A community-driven approach to research ensures that knowledge is translated into action by building capacity among participants.
- Indigenous alienation needs to be addressed for health care and wellbeing services, cultural competency and safety training in the western based health care systems so that service providers are receptive and understanding of cultural contexts of Indigenous peoples.
- Research findings suggest that the MNFC is an important site for cultural reconciliation and for building alliances to break down the systemic discriminatory barriers.

Research in this study revealed that service providing environments free of racism and stereotypes, that are inclusive of Indigenous spirituality and populated with Indigenous health care providers, are urgently needed to achieve health and wellness.

NEXT STEPS

The research is complete. The report is being used to leverage project funding to address the needs identified through the research.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE

The Urban Aboriginal Wellbeing, Wellness and Justice project provided an excellent opportunity for new scholar research training by employing two graduate students who participated in every step of the research process. Under the direction of the co-principle investigators, the students helped design the community engagement process, created the needs assessment tools, coordinated research activities, gathered, organized and analyzed data, prepared information packages, and disseminated findings. Students also gained experience in grant writing; a tool they can give back to the urban Indigenous community by assisting programs in writing applications for much needed funding.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

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, Prince Edward Island.

This research study examined the educational 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).

KEY FINDINGS

The analysis of the research results revealed a dominant theme related to the educational successes of off-reserve Aboriginal learners on Prince Edward Island. These themes were having solid relationships with caring teachers; experiencing a caring school environment; experiencing the effective delivery and communication of curriculum; experiencing hands-on activities; and having and using internal and external supports. Participants identified the following priorities as key considerations in relation to educational success:

- Providing learning experiences where students can feel successful.
- Using multiple instructional methods to learning.
- The use of Aboriginal content and ways of knowing is needed in mainstream education.

- Promote Mi'kmaq language, culture and spirituality in the curriculum.
- Elder presence in education system is important for Aboriginal youth to succeed.
- The promotion of sports, extra-curricular activities, and other such events throughout the school community are important for success.

Barriers participants identified hindering one's educational success included not enough time for social activities, curriculum content, outside pressures, transitions into a new school, stories that were associated with racism and the difficulties manoeuvring within and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.

NEXT STEPS

Results of this study will be disseminated through a workshop entitled, Pathway Forward.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

Urban Aboriginal Populations

AND THE HONOUR OF THE CROWN

Dr. Julia Hughes, Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick; New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council; Native Council of Prince Edward Island; Under One Sky Headstart; Skigin-Elnoog Housing Corporation

The purpose of this research project is to provide a ready reference for communities, service providers and researchers for the state of the law on the duty to consult, the rights, needs and interests of urban Aboriginal populations and their representatives in regards to consultation and accommodation and to guide further research.

This research will seek to further identify areas of policy where urban Aboriginal populations and their representatives have an interest in consultation and to

develop a legal framework for initiating consultation, for enabling participation, for developing positive outcomes, and for legal remedies where consultation is absent, inadequate or where results are not implemented.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Government policy needs to consider the scope of consultations. The urban Aboriginal population is growing, and their rights cannot be left at their community gates. While on reserve or off, Aboriginal peoples need to be viewed as a collective population in which each person is entitled to programs and services equally.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT [UAKN.ORG](#).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Participatory visual research methods have been an extremely exciting avenue to explore women's stories of not only violence, but of resilience and empowerment. The process of digital storytelling has been a highlight from our community-based project.

CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, final report is being written.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT [UAKN.ORG](#).



As part of the knowledge sharing, 4 films were screened at the Rooms during the SJNFC Fall Gala. The screenings were coupled with another event put on by the SJNFC Youth Group, including live performances of First Nations and Inuit drumming, dancing, and singing.

Isolated Events?

CONNECTING PATTERNS OF STRUGGLE AND VULNERABILITY IN YOUNG URBAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S NARRATIVES IN K'JIPUKTUK – HALIFAX

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 and 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 research project aims to understand the meaning of violence for women who use programs and services at the SJNFC. Several methods are being used in this research including the participatory visual approach of Digital Storytelling, participant observation, and conversational-style interviews to collect data.

Trudy Sable, St. Mary's University; Darryl Leroux, St. Mary's University; Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; Initiative for Research and Advocacy on Violence Against Indigenous Women

This project identifies a gap in the current research. It 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, the aim is to document their stories, and create a comprehensive understanding of the systemic challenges they face. This study will examine the 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.

This study will apply a phenomenological-based, narrative approach, and seeks to question the effects that the phenomenon of missing and murdered Aboriginal women has on self perception and sense of personal safety of Aboriginal women currently residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

A variety of patterns have emerged from the interviews and focus groups. Participants have identified themes of isolation, vulnerability, and financial hardship as struggles in finding success and opportunity in the city. Similarly, participants have also identified the access to additional supports and services and education as positive factors to city living. There have also been patterns identified of safe and unsafe areas in the city, as noted by participants.

Although research is still ongoing building cultural capacity and formal education have been identified as leading factors in building strength and perseverance in the lives of young urban Aboriginal women in Halifax. Young mother's that were interviewed stressed the importance of Aboriginal parent support groups and the ability to access the land and nature.

CURRENT STATUS

This project is currently in the data collection stage.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT [UAKN.ORG](#).

Creation Stories: Urban Aboriginal Early Education and Literacy Intervention

Neil Forbes, Principal Investigator,
Director of Education, Lennox Island
First Nation, PEI and Greg McKenna,
Ph. D. Research Consultant, Applied
Research Department, Holland College

This project aims at combining traditional ways of knowing and teaching with relevant and effective research, this research will aim 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 also it will be another step in creating a community that supports culture and knowledge.

The research goal is to establish a culturally grounded curriculum for a pre-natal and early year's program for expectant or new Aboriginal parents (newborn to 3 years of age) in urban settings.

CURRENT STATUS

Initial consultation with Elders is complete; interviews and literature review is in progress.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG

Non-Status and Off-Reserve Beneficiaries in New Brunswick

Dr. Julia Hughes, University of
New Brunswick; New Brunswick
Aboriginal Peoples Council

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. The purpose of this project is to enable the NBAPC to build on the report it received from the consultants to document the demographic makeup of off reserve populations in New Brunswick, to demonstrate their entitlement to benefits under existing treaties, and to facilitate ongoing and future negotiations between NBAPC and the federal and provincial governments by grounding negotiations

in a shared understanding of the populations in question, their associational connections and the representational rights and capacity of NBAPC.

Data was acquired through secondary documentation, historical material and academic literature as well as a survey of *Non-Status* Maliseet, Mi'kmaq and Passamaquoddy, held through three mediums: face to face interviews, telephone interviews and a web-survey. A total of 129 responses were received.

CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, final report in progress.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS
PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT 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 and Shelley Francis –
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton

The purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of Aboriginal nursing students who are enrolled at University of New Brunswick, Fredericton 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.

CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress.

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT UAKN.ORG.

UAKN NATIONAL PROJECT



The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery landscape: themes, trends, gaps and prospects

The landscape of urban Aboriginal organizations now extends beyond social service needs and includes language and culture, economic development, education, art and health among other sectors. The growth of this infrastructure has been organic - driven by community needs and desires, the availability of funding from governments and local capacity for organizational development and management.

The national research project examines this organizational infrastructure through the development of an inventory of organizations and their service areas with a view towards the identification of gaps or areas requiring additional attention or development.

This project consists of two phases: the first is the development of a national inventory of urban Aboriginal organizations, led by the UAKN Secretariat. The second phase is lead by each of the four research centres, and explores community perspectives on service delivery. These two phases will come together to provide a national picture while identifying gaps and opportunities for further programs/services and research and local, regional and national levels.

CURRENT STATUS

Phase 1 research is complete, report forthcoming. Phase 2 has started, with results expected Fall 2015.

The UAKN – Keeping the Research Circle Strong

The UAKN now finds itself in a very exciting stage. As we enter year four of the five-year partnership grant we have over 30 projects and growing. We currently have 10 final reports submitted, as highlighted throughout. The UAKN Secretariat has put together smaller research briefs to be posted on the UAKN website to compliment the final reports and will continue to do so as results and findings are reported.

Various resources and tools are being created out of the research process which speaks to how community research is actively occurring. Examples 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 follow. We hope to share these resources with interested partners as they become available. The UAKN Secretariat will also lead the dissemination of final reports, final papers, journal articles, research briefs and conference presentations that are submitted to us by the Regional Research Centres.

The preceeding examples highlight that the UAKN is facilitating a reciprocal relationship, rather than only doing research. 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 projects highlight the community driven nature of the projects. Most focus groups and other data collection methods encompass Aboriginal cultures and world views 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

 uakn.org

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 To subscribe to our UAKN E-Newsletter please email uakn@nafc.ca

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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!

To see the latest Calls for Proposals visit:
uakn.org/category/calls-for-proposals/

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 www.uakn.org.

THE UAKN WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK AND
PARTNERSHIP OF ALL THE COMMUNITIES INVOLVED
IN THE RESEARCH TAKING PLACE ACROSS THE REGIONS.



