



UAKN

Urban Aboriginal  
Knowledge Network

RCQU

Réseau de connaissances des  
Autochtones en milieu urbain

2016-2017

# SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

2016-2017 Summary of Research

Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network  
(UAKN)

Research for a Better Life

March 2017

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 1** OVERVIEW
- 9** WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE
- 22** PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE
- 48** CENTRAL RESEARCH CIRCLE
- 55** UAKN ATLANTIC



# OVERVIEW



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

The National Household Survey (NHS) 2011 data indicates that nearly 60% of Aboriginal peoples in Canada live in urban areas, with 27% of this group being under the age of 16. Research on this growing population can be sparse and infrequent. The UAKN seeks to address this knowledge gap.

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada (INAC) co-led the creation of the UAKN in 2007. In 2012 the UAKN was awarded a 5-year, \$2.5 million partnership grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Through the work of over 80 formal partners and countless other supporters. There are currently over 60 UAKN projects taking place across the regions with over 23 completed projects and counting including a national UAKN project examining service delivery in the four regions. Each of the completed projects are available on the UAKN Research Map at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map) along with accompanying research briefs highlighting key findings. The UAKN Research Map is an interactive map resource that provides that latest statistics, research and information on the Urban Aboriginal population in Canada.

As the UAKN enters year five of the five-year partnership grant themes such as evaluation, national research and discussions about what the UAKN will leave behind for communities have been at the forefront. From these conversations that UAKN Aboriginal Circle developed a project. This Aboriginal Circle led project was titled, the Legacy Project that seeks to ask the question “what does the UAKN leave behind for communities?” while highlighting the process of community driven research to assist in building future capacity for communities to become involved in community driven research. Stay tuned!

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

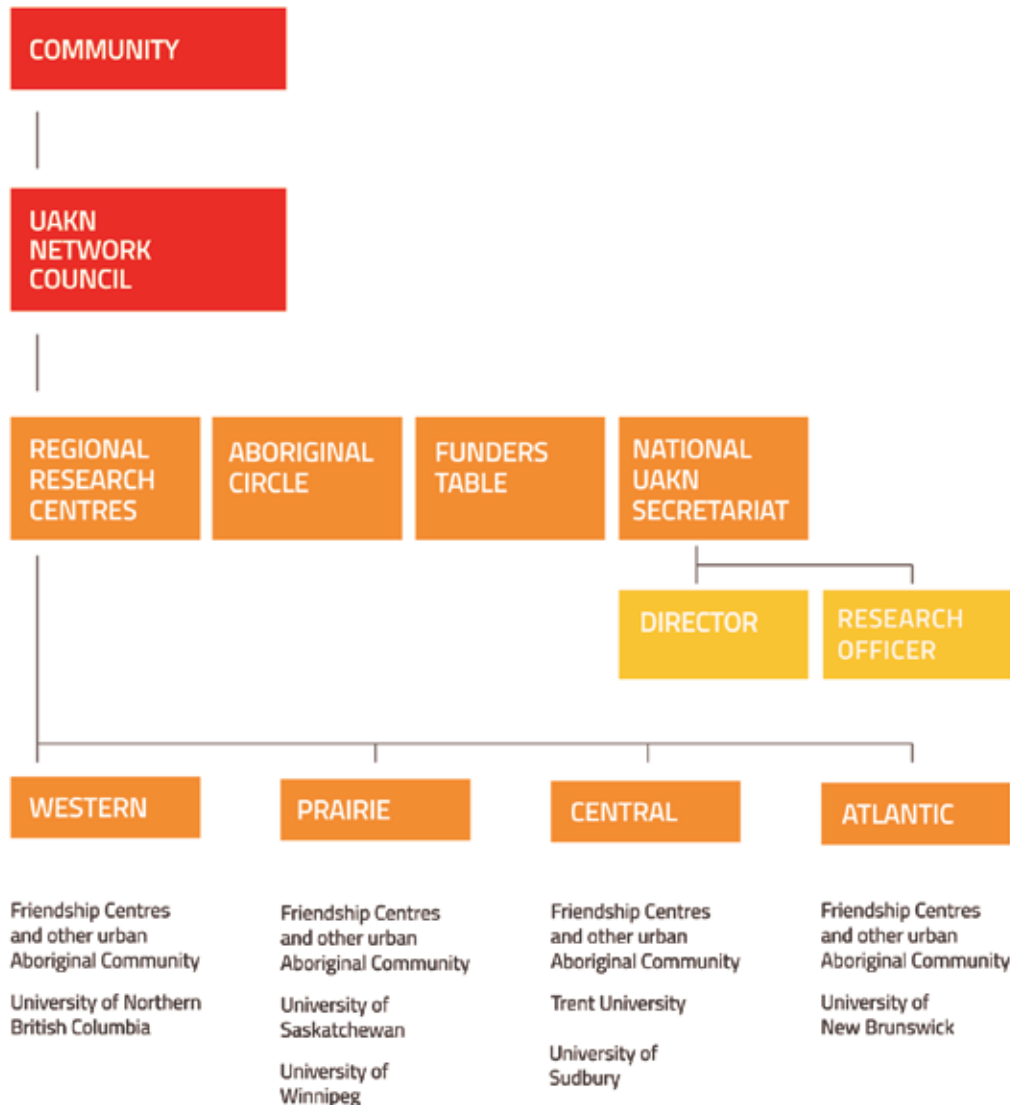
## What is Community Driven Research?

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

# UAKN SECRETARIAT UPDATE

## THE UAKN ABORIGINAL CIRCLE AND NETWORK COUNCIL

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



**Table 1**

The governance structure of the UAKN operates as a Network Council (See Table 1). The purpose of the Network Council is to 1) determine strategic direction and priorities; 2) advise on knowledge mobilization and stakeholder engagement; 3) assess the Network Council’s accomplishments; and, 4) to contribute to fundraising. More specifically, the Network Council has articulated broad research themes that guide UAKN research and knowledge mobilization activities, and ratify UAKN reports and policy documents.

### **The Network Council is also responsible for the following:**

- Identifying and implementing national comparative research projects;
- Ensuring the transmission of research findings to implement policy development;
- Assisting in the coordination of UAKN conferences;
- Contribute to dissemination activities; and
- Monitor research quality and the appropriateness throughout the research project.

The Aboriginal Circle is comprised of Aboriginal persons from throughout Canada who are leaders and respected in their communities. The Aboriginal Circle also provides guidance in matters of ethical and cultural relevancy with respect to the research processes instituted by the UAKN. The Aboriginal Circle was established in conjunction with the three other components of the Network Council (i.e. Funders' Table, Secretariat and Regional Research Centres) in early governance development.

The UAKN's Aboriginal Circle and Network Council, meet face to face annually. The UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles and UAKN Terms of Reference are reviewed and approved annually, and can be found at: [uakn.org](http://uakn.org)

The 2016 UAKN Network Council meeting was held November in Ottawa Ontario. Key items discussed were UAKN Budget projection, review of the UAKN terms of reference and UAKN guiding ethical principles, UAKN moving forward, UAKN evaluation next steps including framework development and the establishment of an evaluation committee, discussion on the 2016 CINSA publication and discussions on community driven research and Indigenous research and terms and definitions. As the UAKN enters its fifth-year themes such as evaluation, national research and discussions about what the UAKN will leave behind for communities will continue.

The 2016 UAKN Aboriginal Circle meeting was held December 2016 in Ottawa, Ontario. A project developed by the Aboriginal Circle that asks the question what does the UAKN leave behind for communities is in the beginning stages. The UAKN Secretariat is moving forward with assisting in supporting the Aboriginal Circle led project, titled the national Legacy Project.

## **Ethical Principles Guiding UAKN Community Driven Research**

Principles that guide all research undertaken through the UAKN need to take it a step further and ask the question, *how does this benefit urban Aboriginal communities and people?*

The UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles is a ground breaking document demonstrated how community driven research is implemented in action. Research undertaken through the UAKN is premised on implementing meaningful change at the community level and must be community driven. The UAKN is proud that this document has emerged out of the work of the UAKN members and hope that this can serve as a model in how research with communities should occur and to ensure that the research benefits communities.

The UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles encompasses an acknowledgement of community ethics concerning research. It is further recognized that this document is a small iteration of the many Indigenous ethical protocols currently in existence. The UAKN Guiding Principles also ensure that the protection and well-being of all individuals and communities involved in research are respected. The principles also attempt to minimize negative impacts and ensure that the research serves the greater good of society.

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

Another key principle of community driven research is recognizing communities and Indigenous peoples as experts in the research process. This means that the ownership and intellectual property rights lie within the communities and/or individuals that share their knowledge and contribute to the research. The authorship must reflect this. To view the full UAKN Guiding Ethical Principles Document, visit: [uakn.org](http://uakn.org)



## POST CINSA 2016 UPDATE AND CINSA 2017 MOVING FORWARD

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) was pleased to co-host with First Nations University of Canada the 2016 Canadian Indigenous/Native Studies Association (CINSA) Reconciliation through Research: Fostering miyo-pimatisiwin conference held June 22-24, 2016 at First Nations University of Canada (FNU) in Regina, Saskatchewan. The event was a great success gathering over 200 participants made up of Elders, community members, scholars, volunteers and vendors that took part in the event over the three days. 47 sessions took place with over 94 presentations on topics surrounding education, Indigenous women, research ethics, truth and reconciliation, oral history, food security, identity, service delivery, youth, Indigenous two spirit, land, housing, social economy, community driven research approaches and processes and much more! All the presentations were presented in a variety of ways including individual paper presentations, panel sessions, roundtables, workshops, film screenings and performances that highlight community-driven research and pathways to achieving reconciliation. The CINSA steering committee is in planning process of gathering all the final papers presented at CINSA 2016 for a publication. Stay tuned!

The next CINSA 2017 will be hosted in Puebla Mexico. This year's theme is Beyond Borders: Indigenous Thought and Mobility in a Contentious World CINSA 2017 will be held on June 14-16 2017 at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico. For more information visit: [allevents.in/puebla/cinsa-2017-beyond-borders/1752406678317666](http://allevents.in/puebla/cinsa-2017-beyond-borders/1752406678317666)



## THE STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are at the root of the success of the UAKN. Partnerships are instrumental to enact meaningful change that benefits urban Aboriginal communities through the development of collaborative policy. The UAKN is represented by several layers of partnerships throughout Canada. They include Friendship Centres, universities, community members and governments. There are currently over 80 formal partners. As the UAKN moves forward we will continue to strengthen these partnerships and broaden the UAKN Network's reach!

Friendship Centres play a key role in community driven research. The UAKN has developed partnerships with various non-profit community groups as well as various Friendship Centres and Provincial Territorial Associations (PTAs). This has largely been fostered through the UAKN-SSHRC partnership grant application as many of our partners and participants involve employees in executive positions among the Friendship Centre Movement. The UAKN projects are coming from strength-based approaches rooted in relationship building and partnerships. Many of the partnerships formed in the research-taking place have led to additional project funding and led to second phases!

## KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION – SHARING COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The UAKN and its partners are committed to continuing the mobilization of emerging knowledge from the over 60 regional research projects taking place across the regions. Community driven research ensures that the UAKN is accessible to communities and its various stakeholders to expand impact. The UAKN transmits this knowledge through its website [uakn.org](http://uakn.org) and other social media tools.

Community driven research facilitates knowledge mobilization at all stages through the research process. Thus, the partnerships created through this research process have a long-lasting and positive impact at the community level.

UAKN project key findings and knowledge are being mobilized in many innovative and creative ways. UAKN project key findings are being shared through film, photo voice projects, documentaries, museum exhibits, educational resources, curriculum development, podcasts, and interactive webinars as new ways to share key findings, policy recommendations and community impacts from a community driven research approach. The art of storytelling and research are strongly connected in community driven research approaches. Using research as a pathway towards reconciliation has also been a strong theme that has emerged. Holistic principles that guide the research process allow for communities to become empowered by the knowledge being transmitted.

# UAKN REGIONAL RESEARCH CENTRES

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The UAKN Regional Research Centres are comprised of urban Aboriginal communities, practitioners, academics and government policy makers. Each centre is responsible for planning projects, broadening stakeholder engagement and ensuring knowledge exchange in their region of Canada.

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

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

The UAKN Regional Research Centres connect community members, policy makers, regional universities and researchers from a cross-section of disciplines and stakeholders to engage in community driven research. Each regional research centre has an adjudication committee with community members, researchers, and government partners to review proposals and fund the diverse research projects taking place.

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

As many of the research projects reach the completion stage the UAKN is beginning to see some emerging themes, including:

- The use of storytelling,
- Innovations in knowledge transfer and dissemination,
- Violence against Indigenous women and girls,
- Research as a pathway to Reconciliation,
- Service Delivery and Programs,
- Holistic Health and Well-Being,
- Cultural Competency,
- Education and Economic Development,
- Food Security and Food Sovereignty,
- Homelessness,
- Urban Indigenous Identity,
- Two-spirit identity,
- Youth empowerment, and
- Community Driven research and its processes and much more!

Broader themes surrounding culture, resilience and reconciliation are emerging. The UAKN research reveals that the urban Aboriginal experience can be diverse and further suggests that there must be innovative ways to transmit this knowledge in a way that is reflective of the connections to history, culture and traditional knowledge and how these things alone can bring together communities to create social change. The UAKN looks forward to sharing a more in depth analysis of themes found in the UAKN research as all the projects reach their completion.

## NAFC-UAKN NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

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### The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape: Themes, Trends, Gaps and Prospects National Report Phase 1 and Phase 2

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, in partnership with the National Association of Friendship Centres, completed a multi-site research project to assess the urban Indigenous service delivery landscape. This research project was completed in two phases: the first was a national overview of the existing services and organizations for urban Indigenous communities and the second was an in depth examination of urban Indigenous organizations and services at a regional level.

#### **PHASE 1 UAKN NATIONAL REPORT BACKGROUND**

The first phase of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network's National Project on The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape. Phase 2 of the study, led by each of the UAKN's four regional research centres, will involve a more in-depth study in the regions, including interviews and community perspectives from the ground. In terms of community-based values, the inventory and theme framework for the Phase 1 project was developed from the perspective of Indigenous-based research frameworks and paradigms. Phase 1 of the project presented here addressed four key areas including:

- 1 Development of a national inventory of urban Aboriginal services and their organizations across regions;
- 2 Implications of urban Aboriginal population and community characteristics for service delivery;
- 3 Determination of service priority areas and gaps; and, Promising Practices in the sustainability and improvement of urban Aboriginal service delivery.

## PHASE 2 UAKN NATIONAL REPORT BACKGROUND

Phase two of the National project summarizes the reports submitted by each UAKN region, Western, Prairie, Central and Atlantic. Each region consists of two provinces, with the exception of the Atlantic region. The project's main goals were to:

- Examine the invisible infrastructure of urban Indigenous service delivery organizations by developing an inventory of organizations and their service areas with a view toward identifying gaps for increased service improvement; Examine organizations that facilitate urban Indigenous people's participation in the economy;
- Explore improvement options for urban Indigenous economic participation, for enhanced services in underserved areas and enriched relationships between urban Indigenous organizations, non - Indigenous organizations and First Nations, Métis, Inuit organizations;
- Highlight services that enhance participation in the economy, innovative partnerships, and positive relationships between various stakeholders.

The goal of this research was to understand this vast and complex terrain, reporting on service gaps, innovations, economic participation, and organizational relationships. The committee for each region organized their own research project, based upon the suggested themes, and proceeded to interview individuals representing different Indigenous service organizations in their area. The specifics of these research projects are contained within the regional reports. Each regional report tells the story of the challenges, innovations and successes of urban Indigenous organizations. Though the regions vary in their histories, landscapes and context, many of the findings reveal common themes on the need for improvement in services for full economic participation to be realized.

All these reports can be found here: [uakn.org/research-project/the-urban-aboriginal-service-delivery-landscape-themes-trends-gaps-and-prospects-national-report](https://uakn.org/research-project/the-urban-aboriginal-service-delivery-landscape-themes-trends-gaps-and-prospects-national-report)

# WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE



The UAKN Western Research Centre (RRC) is based out of the University of Northern British Columbia and is led by co-directors Dr. Ross Hoffman, First Nations Studies and Dr. Paul Bowles, Economics and International Studies. The Western RRC Executive committee is comprised of representatives from the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, the BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, and Dr. Yale Belanger from the University of Lethbridge. There are currently over 16 research projects in the Western Region to report on. To date there are 6 completed Western Research Centre projects with final reports submitted and 10 projects ongoing!

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## WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Giving Voice to Urban Aboriginal Families

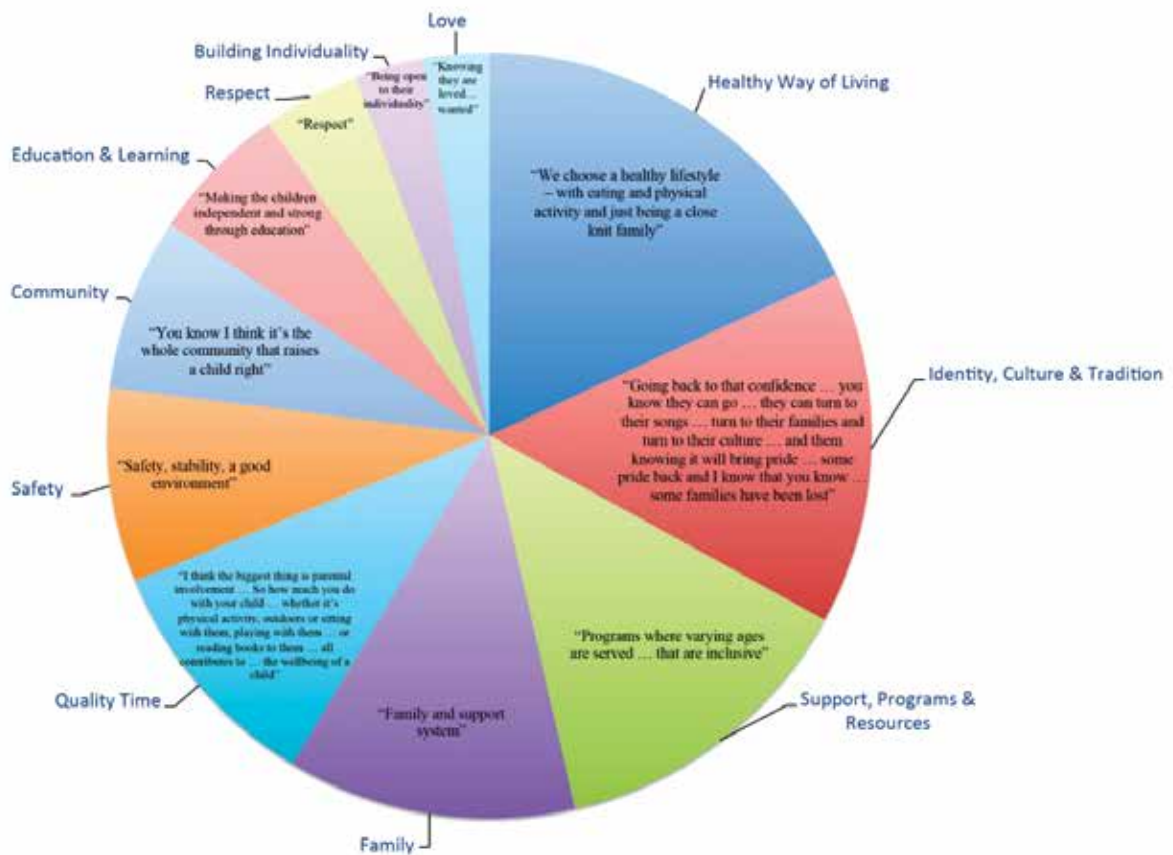
**Beverly Smith, D.Phil. (Oxon) Associate Director, Centre for Early Childhood Research and Policy, University of Victoria and Suzanne Jackson, Hulitan Family Services Society and Aboriginal Engagement Initiative, Leslie Brown, University of Victoria Adjunct and BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Helen Raptis University of Victoria and Danielle Smith Provincial Office of the Early Years**

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Love** - Children need to know they are loved and wanted;
- **Healthy Way of Living** - Choosing to live healthy by eating well and having physical activity through being a close-knit family;
- **Identity, Culture and Tradition** - Important to restore their confidence, and knowing that they can turn to their songs and turn to their families. Children need to know that they can turn to their families, and turn to their culture and know that it will bring them pride;
- **Support Programs & Resources** - The need to have programs where the varying ages are served and having inclusive programming;
- **Families** - Having a strong family and support system;
- **Quality Time** - Fostering relationships through parental involvement. Through spending time with your children whether it is a physical activity, being outdoors, or playing with them and reading to them. It all contributes to the well-being of a child;
- **Safety** - Safety and stability establishes a good environment for the child's development;
- **Community** - The whole community contributes to raising the child;
- **Education and Learning** - You can help to make the child strong and independent through learning;
- **Respect** - There needs to be respect established in the family; and
- **Building Individually** - Being open to their individuality.

Key themes from this research are depicted in the below graph:



There was a ten-minute video that was produced by the organizers. The link is below. The video provides additional information and evidence to support the growth of Indigenous children in the South Vancouver Island region. Some of the topics that are illustrated in the video pertain to:

- Encouraging children to pursue their education;
- Teaching them their cultural teachings;
- Promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity;
- Fostering dental health care; and
- Providing culturally relevant programming (through learning songs and storytelling with community Elders);

*“The healthy living and healthy programs all tie in together and I really feel strongly that this needs to be promoted and supported for all children on and off reserve.”*

Community Member in the study

To view the full video visit: [youtube.com/watch?v=mMYeMlkZk5M](https://youtube.com/watch?v=mMYeMlkZk5M)

## CURRENT STATUS

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

# Precarious in Prince George Urban Aboriginal Individuals’ Financial Behavior and Experiences: Some Focus Group Evidence

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

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- Aboriginal people have been identified as a priority group by federal policy initiatives designed to address financial literacy. Specific concern relates to the use of fringe financial institutions (FFIs).
- This study revealed that financial literacy levels among Aboriginal people were higher than anticipated and the use of fringe financial institutions (FFIs) were lower than previously though although not uncommon.
- FFIs were used primarily as a last resort or due to bank policies being in conflict with the participant’s work/life circumstances. FFIs were used for convenience and their policies on personal identification as opposed to being used because the participants lacked financial literacy.
- Research identified the need for ‘financial literacy plus’ programs for Aboriginal people and the need to raise income levels and have employers pay a living wage for waged employment.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome the use of FFIs by Aboriginal people and increase the level of financial literacy in Aboriginal communities the following policy recommendations that call on the federal government to focus on policies that promote ‘financial literacy plus’ programs are highlighted. These programs would provide an opportunity for participants to raise their income levels and creditworthiness through programs such as matched-savings programs and emergency loan facilities. Additional recommendations emphasize on policies that look to raise income levels among low-income earners, many participants stated that even with budgeting their low incomes were the main reason they used FFIs.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# 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

*Kindergarten Transitions II* project aims to expand the knowledge of existing programs in British Columbia that are supporting early childhood transitions. This study determined some key elements of successful working partnerships between childhood settings and kindergarten and primary schools. It was established that in order to ensure successful transitions between early childhood settings and kindergarten for Aboriginal students the following considerations are paramount.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Relationship building and strengthening communication across all stakeholders including families, educators, teachers, administrators and other professional and support agencies at all stages of program/classroom planning, development and implementation.
- Family-centered approaches in all aspects of programs including: outreach, planning, program delivery and assessment/evaluation.
- Culturally inclusive approaches in all aspects of programs – these approaches must include locally relevant language, culture and traditional knowledge and practices.
- Play-based learning experiences to form a strong foundation for holistic child development.
- Collaborative professional development opportunities for ECE’s and teachers.
- Formalizing the above ‘learnings’ in program/school policy.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To further develop Tillicum Lelum’s Aboriginal Early Childhood Development program the following recommendations put forth highlight the importance of creating and implementing reciprocal policy between the early childhood and school programs and the need for formal documentation of the strengths and challenges of transition services and supports could strengthen the quality of existing services. An outcome of this project has been the delivery of a summer pre-kindergarten pilot project funded by the School District, Tillicum Lelum and the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. A second project was funded in July 2015.



UAKN Webinar: Aboriginal Early Childhood Transitions was held for this project March 2015, recording available online: [uakn.org/webinar-aboriginal-early-childhood-transitions](http://uakn.org/webinar-aboriginal-early-childhood-transitions)

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Creating Effective, High Quality Transition Experiences for Young Aboriginal Children and their Families

Danielle Alphonse Vancouver Island University, BC Regional Innovation Chair for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development & Early Childhood Education & Care Teaching Faculty, Linda McDonnell (Adjunct Faculty, Vancouver Island University), Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre (TLAFC), BC Regional Innovation Chair (BCRIC) for Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (AECD) and School District 68

The UAKN funded one of the projects that has contributed to the Qeq College AECD program titled, "Kindergarten Transitions II: A Scan of Existing Supportive Programs for Aboriginal Children and Families in BC" (2013). This project builds from the Kindergarten Transitions II and aimed to Developing Culturally Sensitive Evaluation and Assessment Tools for Early Childhood Programs focused on what was learned from the evaluation process and how this has influenced the development of evaluation and assessment tools.

## KEY FINDINGS

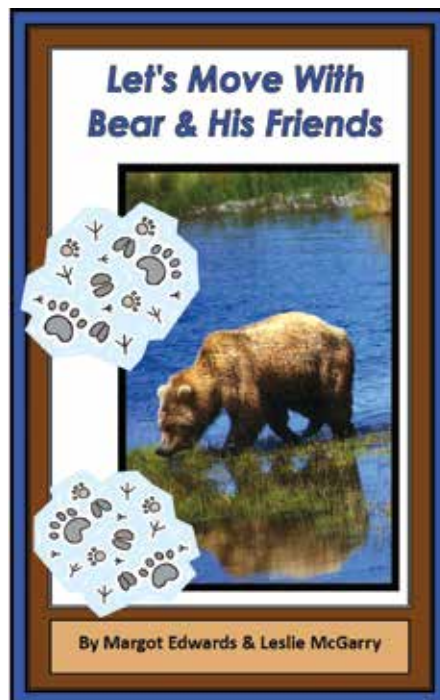
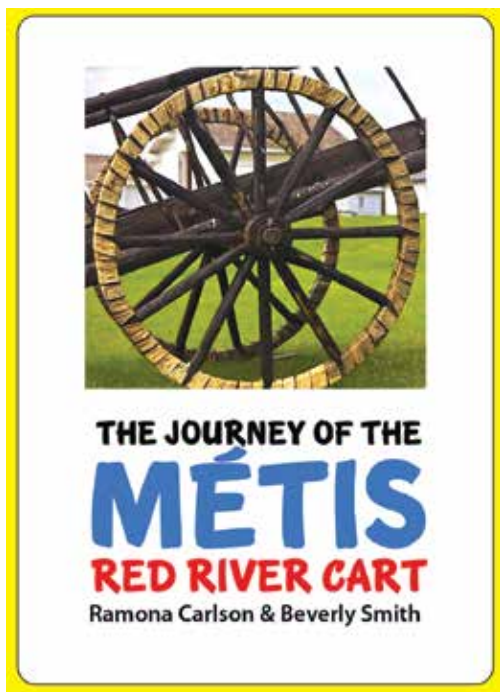
- Parent outreach and orientation is important and must be collaborative and focus on strengthening relationships and allow opportunities for parents to inform development of assessment for learning tools and strategies.
- Elder/professional staff orientation and training is collaborative, engaging with the inclusion of focus group sessions to ensure knowledge is shared related to the Qeq program and related research (assessment learning) to school district teachers once children transition to the kindergarten program.
- Creating additional space and time for cultural input and feedback is necessary and the evaluation tools must be adjusted to allow for this input, create more diverse opportunities, ensure that the research team us involved with cultural events and activities to increase exposure to community and cultural traditions, practices, and ways of knowing that contribute to the development of culturally sensitive and responsive research tools and processes.
- Project administration and management that focuses on strengthening relationships, connect families, strengthen the assessment for learning approach, improve coordination and planning for all partners involved, revisit Qeq values on a regular basis, inclusion of Elders and ensure that there is equity across the partnerships.

## CURRENT STATUS

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



UAKN Webinar Series: Working From the Heart held February 2016 and is now available online:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=6Y27VCr-cwl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y27VCr-cwl)



## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## UAKN Prince George Protocol Development Proposal

Dr. Michael John Evans Professor, University of British Columbia, Community Culture and Global Studies; Barb Ward-Burkitt, Executive Director Prince George Native Friendship Centre; Central Interior Native Health Society and Positive Living North

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

An exciting outcome of this project is the publication of an Urban Aboriginal Research Charter Template. This template is designed to aid in the development of research protocols to ensure that meaningful dialogue and partnerships between Urban Aboriginal organizations and researchers occur. It was specifically designed for those that wish to foster collaborations to make significant contribution to the well-being of urban Aboriginal peoples. This four part was created in four sections: 1 - Research Charter Template, 2 - A Step-by-Step Guide for Doing Research with Us, 3 - Research Inquiry Proposal Template and 4 - Community Research Agreement.

## KEY FINDINGS

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

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

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, and the final paper is forth coming.

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

Publication available here: [icer.ok.ubc.ca/\\_shared/assets/UA\\_Research\\_Charter\\_Template54352.pdf](http://icer.ok.ubc.ca/_shared/assets/UA_Research_Charter_Template54352.pdf)

# WESTERN RESEARCH CENTRE RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

## Truth in Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Dr. Ralph Bodor of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary (Edmonton Division), Blue Quills First Nations College, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Mahegun Trails Inc. and the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families (AASCF)

This research project builds upon research conducted in partnership with Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Calgary that concluded with the creation of a set of Indigenous Program Indicators. This project created thirteen indicators in five areas (Indigenous Identity, Social Inclusion, Trauma and Healing,

Traditional Parenting, and Ceremony) that are now being used by funded FCSS programs to support continued program funding. A challenge in the western region to the Indigenous Program Indicators (IPI) questions is their reliability and validity from a western perspective.

To date the researchers have completed all initial ceremony protocol related to project. Sharing Circles have taken place and data collection is now complete. Currently engaged in a iterative process of data analysis. Translation from Cree to English is complete. Final documentation process is now underway while exploring alternative methods of knowledge mobilization that would reflect and honour the wisdom-seeking process to date.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

This research has revealed the importance of ceremony, language and protocol through the process of using Indigenous Research Methodologies. Discovering the need to have Indigenous projects validated by a ceremonial song and related protocol. There are similarities and differences in ceremonies, practices and protocols of differing nations.

## COMMUNITY DRIVEN RESEARCH IMPACTS

*The role of a traditional song and it's relationship to the reliability, validity and credibility of research being done in Indigenous communities is important. The gift of a song validates the wisdom being shared and gathered. Elders also shared with us that there are accountability processes built into Indigenous culture that are just as reliable and credible as process that govern Western society.*

The role of traditional song has been the major highlight of the project. We learned that we needed a song, the protocol to ask for a song and afterwards, we received a song from a local ceremonial holder. The song given to us through this project gives us the permission from the ancestors to do the wisdom-seeking in these communities. The team also recognized the importance of living the teachings within the context of the wisdom-seeking process. Once you receive the teachings, you live the teachings.

## CURRENT STATUS

Knowledge from process have been shared with three classes of graduate students regarding Indigenous Research Methodologies. Team plans to host an evening workshop to share findings with interested community members.

This project is in progress, for more information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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# Pathways to Restorative Child Welfare Practices: Decision Making at VACFSS

**Shelley Johnson (Saulteaux) Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia, School of Social Work and Bernadette Spence (Cree) Executive Director, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society**

The research goal of this project is to identify the pathways of decision-making and practice within child protection. This project aims to generate restorative outcomes for the unique aggregate of children and

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

More information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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## Transforming education: Strategies to improve the education of urban Aboriginal youth

**Dr. Leslie Brown, University of Victoria; Dr. Shelly Johnson, University of British Columbia; Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Holly Anderson; Surrounded By Cedar Child and Family Services, Barb Cowan; Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, Gary Mavis; and Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Joycellyn Helland**

Urban Aboriginal youth, particularly those living in Canada's foster care systems, have unique educational needs. Graduation levels are much lower in comparison to both Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal students in foster care. Those in foster care tend to experience much greater disruption in their educational experiences. This research project seeks to engage with Aboriginal youth groups to better understand their educational struggles, successes and needs.

Urban Aboriginal youth representing four Aboriginal youth groups living in larger metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Victoria BC were asked to creatively respond to the question "Who or what could make you want to stay in school?" The four youth groups are asked to create a video, poster, art project, theatrical performance or song to address the research question. Their responses were videotaped at a one-day provincial youth education conference on October 18, 2013 at the University of British Columbia. Full video available here: [youtube.com/watch?v=KUeDDdvlhj8](https://youtube.com/watch?v=KUeDDdvlhj8)

This research is committed to meaningful engagement with urban Aboriginal youth. They have been involved in the development of this project since its inception and will continue to be involved throughout the data collection, data analysis and future presentation of findings.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

This research identifies the need for a better connection and support between Indigenous youth in foster care today with those of previous decades. Further reveals the need for more educational support/waivers/ tuition and living allowances for Indigenous youth in care.

Youth in foster care need specific support and orientation to post secondary educational institutions. This support must begin in elementary school. Youth in care must be supported to connect with Indigenous instructors in trades, post secondary academic programs and to learn from other Indigenous educators in the areas that the youth are interested in pursuing in post secondary education.

## CURRENT STATUS

Project is completed. Was a one day conference held at UBC. The UAKN has been provided with a video of the project and it was presented at the UNBC conference.

Final paper in progress, for more information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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## Does Subsidized Housing Aid Aboriginal Transition into the Urban Environment? A Front-Line Service-Delivery Perspective from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

**Dr. Yale D. Belanger, Professor Native American Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge and Rosie Many Grey Horses, Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority**

In 2012, Treaty 7 Urban Aboriginal Housing Authority (hereinafter Treaty 7 Housing), of Lethbridge, Alberta, initiated a homebuyer's education project to advance its clients' knowledge of the home buying process. During this project Treaty 7 Housing identified several internal limitations in its client intake policy, its recruitment strategies, its post-intake oversight, and in preparing clients to secure non-Treaty 7 Housing accommodations in a timely fashion.

This research projects seeks to identify what are the challenges confronting its clients upon moving into the city; what do the clients hope to achieve with Treaty 7 Housing and why do current clients express apprehension about leaving Treaty 7 Housing? This project also aims to empower local urban Aboriginal people by engaging them in research that will help improve the relationship between government services and urban Aboriginal families.

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. More information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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## Melq'ilwiye: Intersections of Identity, Culture, and Health Among Urban Aboriginal Youth

Dr. Natalie Clark, University of British Columbia; Dr. Patrick Walton, University of British Columbia; Interior Indian Friendship Centre; Thompson Rivers University

Melq'ilwiye is a Secwepemc word that means, coming together. This research takes place on the traditional territories of the Secwepemc peoples in the city of Kamloops. The research project has been developed through ongoing dialogue between community and academic researchers with the goals being:

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

### CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. More information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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## Uncovering Colonial Legacies (Formerly 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 research project involved Indigenous youth collaborators, who recently exited the child welfare system. Youth contributed to this research through arts and storytelling. Youth were approached to examine how settler colonialism shapes child welfare (dis)placements. The term (dis)placement was a point of departure in discussions with youth to understand the historical connection between the child welfare and residential school systems.

### PRELIMINARY RESULTS

This project demonstrates that the child welfare system does not serve as a solution to the underlying issues facing Indigenous communities, but rather perpetuates an ongoing cycle of inequality and dispossession. Current institutional policies continue to distance youth from their families and communities by preventing youth's access to information, cultural programs and family members. These policies continue disconnect Indigenous youth from their culture and communities and serve to threaten Indigenous rights and sovereignty. This project developed short films on the experiences of Aboriginal youth in southern Alberta. These films



were made public on media-sharing platforms such as Vimeo and Youtube.com, useful for diverse housing agencies with which we are well-connected who have indicated that this format would help educate the broader public on this pressing topic. At a homelessness research forum that Dr. Henderson's research team recently hosted in October 2013 in Calgary, representatives from the province's Interagency Council on Homelessness and the city's Homelessness Foundation confirmed an interest in being able to draw on such films for their own awareness campaigns.

This research has been presented at a total of 17 lectures, conferences and gatherings so far to a collective audience of more than 1800 people in Calgary, Edmonton, Prince George, Enoch Nation, and Toronto.

A YouTube video was created with the voices of the youth involved: [.youtube.com/watch?v=cM\\_kU\\_ljo0c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cM_kU_ljo0c)

Uncovering Colonial Legacies Indigenous Youth in Child Welfare: [vimeo.com/123032507](https://vimeo.com/123032507)

## CURRENT STATUS

Research is complete, final report in progress.

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

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

Preliminary finding revealed some primary themes:

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

## CURRENT STATUS

Research in progress. More information can be found at: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

# PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE



The Prairie Regional Research Centre (RRC) is based out of the University of Saskatchewan led by Director Dr. Ryan Walker, Department of Geography and Planning and Associate Director Dr. Jaime Cidro University of Winnipeg, Department of Anthropology. The Prairie RRC executive committee is comprised of representatives from Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in the Province of Manitoba, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Saskatchewan Region and Dr. Bettina Schneider First Nations University of Canada. There are currently 22 research projects funded in the Prairie Region with ten completed projects to report on..

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## PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE COMPLETED PROJECTS

### Defining Food Security for Urban Aboriginal People

Dr. Jaime Cidro, Department of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg; Dr. Evelyn Peters, Urban and Inner City Studies, University of Winnipeg; and Jim Sinclair, Executive Director, Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

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

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

UAKN Webinar Series: Defining Food Security for Urban Aboriginal People held in March 2015, available online: [uakn.org/webinar-defining-food-security-for-urban-aboriginal-people](http://uakn.org/webinar-defining-food-security-for-urban-aboriginal-people)

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Begin a dialogue at the local level for understanding not only how to access cultural food, but how to authentically engage in Indigenous Food Security through a knowledge and awareness of food preparation.
- The knowledge and understanding associated with growing and nurturing your own food is connected to a larger understanding of the relationship between the environment, spirituality and people.
- Obtaining access to traditional food in the city is different than for people living in rural and reserve communities and needs to be addressed as such.
- Access to cultural food in the city is about alleviating food insecurity, but also about a larger reclamation and connection to food and food production
- Make recommendations concerning food systems policy in order to meet the needs for culturally valued foods for urban Aboriginal households.

The success of this project has now led into a second phase. The research question for this second phase is to *explore the ways in which urban organizations can “upskill” Indigenous food practices such as food growing, harvesting and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) within an urban context.* This research will explore the operationalization of IFS principles by undertaking a series of traditional food preparation, cultivation, and procurement workshops followed by focus groups to talk about IFS principles within an urban context. This project will seek to expand its network of partners, develop curriculum and to continue to make policy recommendations that can be used at a regional level.

## CURRENT STATUS

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



Photo credit: Jesse Vanderbilt

# An Exploration of Addictions Recovery among Aboriginal Peoples who utilize the Friendship Centre in Saskatoon: A Holistic Approach to Healing

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- This study reveals that how Aboriginal Friendship Centres are a place of community and have the ability to assist in addictions recovery. Many respondents stated that cultural, spiritual, or traditional programs are necessary, and need to be offered at the Friendship Centre level to assist in recovery.
- Addictions recovery is a community responsibility and a holistic approach is needed.
- Participants identified social inclusion at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre as an important factor in the addictions recovery process, with a strong focus on ceremony, culture, family, and a sense of belonging.
- Findings suggest that there is a need for increased support for local, regional, and national governments for urban services utilized by the Aboriginal communities.
- Healing factors mentioned by participants were having children, family support, 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 are some strong linkages that need to be further examined between incarceration rates and addictions treatment.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

Aboriginal Policy Studies Journal Article was published and can be found here:

[ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/21702](http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/21702)

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

Dr. Bettina Schneider, First Nations University of Canada Regina, Saskatchewan and Kim Wenger, Newo Yotina Friendship Centre, Regina, Saskatchewan

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

### KEY FINDINGS

- Literature shows that most urban Aboriginal people tend to face significant barriers to financial literacy and economic well-being.
- This research concurs with that assessment and found that individually tailored, culturally appropriate approaches within workshops and aftercare services is critical in addressing the financial literacy and educational needs for urban Aboriginal Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (NYFC) clients
- Focus groups in this study revealed there is a need to focus on addictions counselling in the life skills curriculum programming being offered by the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre.
- This study revealed the need to develop stronger partnerships with the Ministry of Social Services and other community and government partners in delivering Aboriginal life skills and financial literacy programs and services

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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

Dr. Isobel M. Findlay; Dr. Joe Garcea; Dr. John G Hansen; Rose Antsanen; Jethro Cheng, University of Saskatchewan; and Bill Holden, Community Co- Director, Community-University Institute for Social Research and City of Saskatoon

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

## KEY FINDINGS

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

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 Quality of Life.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Defining and Responding to Aboriginal Homelessness in Flin Flon

Evelyn Peters, Urban and Inner City Studies, University of Winnipeg, and Shelly Craig, Executive Director, Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- Based on the data collected, it appears that the proportion of Flin Flon's population that is Aboriginal and homeless is higher than homeless statistics in Canada overall.
- Flin Flon's Aboriginal homeless population represents 1.7% of Flin Flon's total population (including the Saskatchewan portion of Flin Flon).
- Flin Flon's Aboriginal homeless population represent a high needs population with high levels of unemployment, low education and income levels, welfare dependence, trauma, and health needs.
- On reserve housing availability due to over-crowding was reported as a key factor revealing some jurisdictional issues.
- Addictions and mental health issues were significantly present in almost all cases being examined identifying a strong need for other resources and services to address homelessness.
- The Aboriginal homeless population shares some of the same determinants of homelessness with other homeless populations, they also experience additional unique factors stemming from colonial histories.
- A multi-service approach that is culturally relevant is needed with strong partnerships between organizations and communities to address Aboriginal homelessness.

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Learning Together: Str8Up, Oskayak High School, and the University of Saskatchewan

*Nancy Van Styvendale, Assistant Professor, English, University of Saskatchewan; Priscilla Settee, Associate Professor, Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan; Sarah Buhler, Assistant Professor, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan; and Stan Tu'Inukafe, Social Worker, Oskayak High School and Coordinator, STR8 UP.*

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- Participants identified consistently that the emphasis on relationships and building community is one of the most significant aspects in the learning process that took place.
- Indigenous knowledge systems such as the circle model were central in structuring the teaching and learning that occurred in this research.

- Using an embodied pedagogy where participants shared their personal and lived experiences was central in gaining a true understanding of knowledge and the realities expressed on the topics of justice and injustice.
- Dialogue where individual lived experiences and stories were shared were a central element to this course and in many ways formed the core “texts”. Participants noted the power of the stories that were shared and how these stories in some cases transformed their worldviews from the dominant narratives.
- Offering a culturally relevant educational space for learning was a key factor in ensuring educational success and outcomes.

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

Our research suggests that the Wahkohtowin class intervenes in dominant models of engaged pedagogy and community-service learning by disrupting notions of a university-community binary, decentering the role and place of university knowledge, and creating a space where students began to practice solidarity and imagine alternatives to our present situation. A second phase of this project was funded titled, Wahkohtowin: Learning Together about Justice and Injustice in the City, more information under new projects below.

## CURRENT STATUS

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



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

### *“We went in as strangers, and left as friends”.*

A former street gang member made this observation about his experience in an innovative, multidisciplinary community-based class that we developed and facilitated with our community collaborator, Stan Tu’Inkuafe in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 2014.



# From Embers to Flames: Identifying strategies of resilience and mental health among inner-city Aboriginal youth

Andrew R. Hatala, PhD University of Saskatchewan Department of Community Health and Epidemiology; Sylvia Abonyi, PhD University of Saskatchewan; Youth Research Assistants from University of Saskatchewan: Kelly Bird-Naytowhow, Tamara Pearl, Tyson Brittan; Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC); White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL); Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (MACSI); Core Youth Neighbourhood Co-op (CYNC) and Pleasant Hill Community Association (PHCA).

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

From Embers to Flames is an arts-based photovoice project that involved 32 Aboriginal youth from inner-city contexts, inviting them to take photos of aspects of their lives and community that provide or foster strength and resilience was developed. Over 1000 images were collected surrounding the theme of resilience. An art gallery exhibit in Saskatoon called, "The Four Seasons of Resilience" was created to display the artistic works of the Aboriginal youth to share with the wider community.

## KEY FINDINGS

The four main themes that resulted from this project entailed the importance of relationship building with Indigenous youth, having wider community engagement, community ethics, and Indigenous knowledge. The involvement of community Elders played a significant role in the success of this project.

- Relationship building with youth through collaborative storytelling is essential in including Indigenous paradigms and perspectives that are inclusive and holistic.
- Wider community engagement is essential to ensure that there are creative environments that foster relationship building for youth where they feel free to self-express.
- Community ethics that include Indigenous cultural and ethical protocols that are meaningful have positive impacts and create long lasting relationships in research.

Indigenous knowledge creates opportunities for the participation of the community as a whole and ensures that the processes and protocols benefit the community while addressing mental health and well-being.

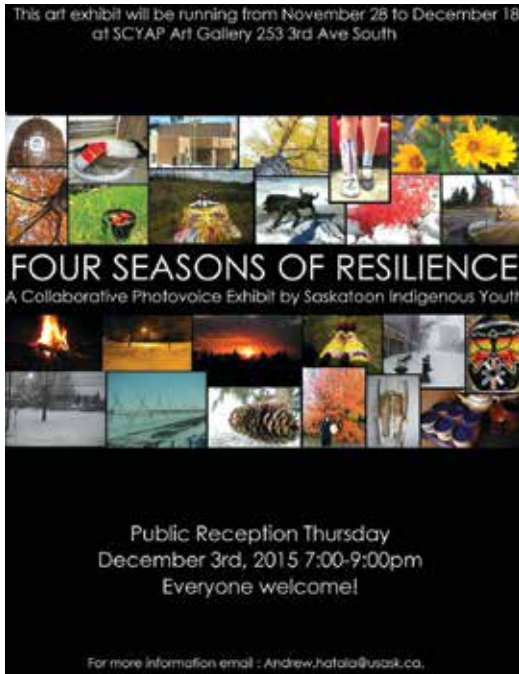
*"While working with an Indigenous perspective and applying the proper methodologies, we also acknowledged the term "All of our relations." Within many Indigenous ways of knowing, the term "All of our relations" refer to acknowledging that we are all connected in some way. This includes the two-legged, four legged, the flyers, crawlers, swimmers, the seen and unseen. This is an interconnection that needs to be respected as it allows us to be mindful of that balance in our own lives".*

Throughout this entire process there were several perspectives and positions learned about fostering positive engagement with the urban Indigenous youth in the project. These included:

1) our relationship building with youth; 2) our wider community engagement; 3) our approach to community ethics and cultural protocols; and 4) our use and employment of Indigenous forms of knowledge. These practices and principles of engagement allowed us to foster an “ethical space” (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004) where the embers of youth resilience and well-being could be fanned into flames.

## CURRENT STATUS

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



(Four Seasons of Resilience exhibit poster)



Sisters Shania (right) and Melissa (left) Duquette both took part in the Four Seasons of Resilience art project.

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

Retrieved from: [eaglefeathernews.com/arts/index.php?detail=1762](http://eaglefeathernews.com/arts/index.php?detail=1762)



A collection of Injigle dresses hang on a fence in inner-city Saskatoon. (Randi Lynn Nanemahco-Candine)



photo collage of Michelle Banhegy. (Michelle Banhegy)

Retrieved from: [cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/four-seasons-of-resilience-1.3334160](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/four-seasons-of-resilience-1.3334160)

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

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

This research project is intended to advance community-identified educational, organizational and governance needs and aspirations of the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). Saskatoon is currently home to the largest number of STC off-reserve members, including approximately 1,000 school age children who constitute the fastest-growing demographic within the city's schools. Given the close relationship between educational attainment and other measures of wellbeing, achieving more equitable educational outcomes for STC learners attending Saskatoon schools is currently one of the most compelling concerns of STC leadership and parents.

The *Mamawohkamatowin* Partnership ensures more equitable outcomes from public education. First Nation leaders responded to provincial partnership policy by establishing innovative partnerships and governance structures which foster greater Aboriginal parental involvement in, and control over, their children's education. The primary intent of this relationship is to foster closer relationships between First Nations and Metis people and the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Division as a means of improving educational outcomes. It was agreed that a Partnership Governance Committee would provide direction and guidance on issues of governance, priority setting and monitoring of the activities of the *Mamawohkamatowin* partnership.

### KEY FINDINGS

- The formation of a shared governance approach is identified as critical to the creation of post-colonial education systems;
- The creation of partnerships allows for a space where Aboriginal and Canadian people can come together based on equality and to work towards the best outcomes for all;
- Factors contributing to success include: culturally congruent curriculum and pedagogical approaches, a representative workforce, integrated services model to provide for student's holistic needs, systematic data collection to plan for success and multiple partnerships with external agencies to leverage resources; and
- Reaffirming culturally relevant spaces to ensure that they receive the same benefit from public education is critical to the success of Aboriginal children.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Data collected for this research project and the *Mamawohkamatowin* Partnership has evolved over the last decade within a provincial policy context. The collaboration between Aboriginal peoples and provincial schools has contextualized means of achieving more equitable educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

The Saskatchewan Education Partnerships Policy is a tripartite agreement between Saskatchewan First Nations, and provincial and federal governments. This agreement works to enhance authentic partnerships and collaboration among the provincial educational system and First Nations and Metis people.

- Shared problem solving, decision making, resources and accountability;
- Clearly identified mutual expectations and defined roles of partners;
- Practices that reflect and nurture the values of mutual respect and understanding;
- A shared commitment to the well being and educational success of each child and young person within provincial and First Nation schools; and
- A shared vision, goals and objectives, established collaboratively.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

Jeff Baker, Assistant Professor and Chair in Aboriginal Education, Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Michelle Whitstone, Graduate Research Assistant, University of Saskatchewan, Stan Yu, Research Associate, University of Saskatchewan, Tracy Roadhouse, Saskatoon Public Schools, Nancy Barr, Saskatoon Public Schools

## KEY FINDINGS

- Collaboration of teachers, Elders/Knowledge Keepers is an important element in increasing Urban Aboriginal student engagement in science education.
- Most Gr. 4/5 students shared very positive feelings about learning science and Indigenous knowledge, with some acknowledging the importance they placed on learning the knowledge of their ancestors;
- Feedback from teachers, elders, and knowledge keepers was overwhelmingly positive; and
- Other comments derived from these conversations included; experienced teachers taking a mentorship role in this work, especially when elders are knowledge keepers are scarce; exploring the use of multi-disciplinary units (rather than science-only) to reflect the holism of Indigenous knowledge; and the need for ongoing professional development opportunities.

*Our research was successful in providing an opportunity to test the process of having teachers and Elders/ knowledge keepers work collaboratively to include IK in a science unit and to test a number of data collection methods. While few significant findings were apparent from this small study, that was not its intent. The experience of conducting this pilot research will significantly inform the design of the larger follow up study.*

A deeper understanding of connections between Indigenous knowledge and science was concluded by a student,

*“I’d say it brings a new perspective. I feel the way the earth has started. I’ve heard the scientific way, and I’ve heard it the spiritual way... And they are both the same it’s just the spiritual way is with different words and it sounds more, uh, meaningful to the people who are saying it. It’s all the same story, it’s all the same thing, it’s just told different”.*

(Grade 9 participant)

This work will also significantly shape the design of a larger follow-up study that will include ten teachers and classes, involve four full days of professional development, and include impacts on student achievement and identity. With the assistance of a further grant from the Prairie Research Centre of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, we will be launching the next Phase of this research in September 2016. Through this research and conversations experienced teachers recognized the importance of taking a mentorship role in this work, especially when elders are knowledge keepers are scarce; exploring the use of multi-disciplinary units (rather than science-only) to reflect the holism of Indigenous knowledge; and the need for ongoing professional development opportunities.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

Dr. Jaime Cidro, Department of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg and Tabitha Martens, Graduate student, Department of Environment and Geography, University of Manitoba

This project is a second phase in response to the project, Defining Food Security for Urban Aboriginal People. The study builds on the concept of food security in an urban Aboriginal context and discusses how Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) can be used to give urban Aboriginal populations control over their food production and consumption. Food sovereignty can be defined as the increased control over food systems and this concept has emerged as a means of addressing food insecurity.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Indigenous people living in urban centres face a wide range of food security issues from limited access to healthy and affordable foods including limited access to cultural food.
- This study examines the ways in which urban organizations can ‘upskill’ Indigenous food practices such as growing, harvesting, and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty within an urban context.
- More than simple access to food is needed, this research demonstrated that traditional or cultural food “upskilling” is central to operationalizing IFS principles, and in an urban context, creativity is required to adapt these food skills.
- There were four key findings that emerged from the research: 1) Food as a part of reclaiming identity; 2) Food memory; 3) Practicing culture in the city; and 4) Food as relationship building.

- Urban Indigenous organizations who are seeking ways of weaving culture into programs and services may consider traditional food upskilling as one important mechanism that will result in a range of social, cultural and economic benefits.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

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

This research projects aims to explore Aboriginal youths' and their families' experiences of education, including their schooling experiences within provincially funded urban schools and as they move between home, community and school. This project examines the research question: How may the experiences of urban Aboriginal youth and their families outside of school places inform the practices and pedagogy within school places? The priorities of this project is to engage in research conversations with participants, write narrative accounts across thematically with experiences that resonate and share with stakeholders the policy implications of youth and family experiences.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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

## Highlights from this project

Community engagement uptake for this project has been outstanding! There are 4 graduate students, 7 undergraduate students, 6 urban Aboriginal high school youth mentor participants, 3 Elders from Treaty 4 Territory, 5 teachers and 4 parents engaged in this research directly.

The program currently employs three urban Aboriginal high school youth in paid mentorship opportunities. The program funds one graduate student and three undergraduate students. Youth are engaged in a variety of wellness activities as they continue the process of building relationships with the community. A website has been developed and a program blog to engage with youth, families, and community members. Please see the attached link: [growingyoungmovers.com/programs/gym-after-school-club](http://growingyoungmovers.com/programs/gym-after-school-club)

## CURRENT STATUS

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

# PRAIRIE RESEARCH CENTRE RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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

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

This research project examines how urban areas have become a focus for the development of alternative food networks. An alternative food network (AFN) is a broad term that encompasses networks of producers, consumers and other actors. They are alternatives to the standard industrial food supply, typically accessed through conventional grocery stores, which we assume are the dominant means of food procurement by the vast majority of urban people. AFN producers include, for example, farmers, hunters and gatherers. AFN 'other actors' include, amongst others, community-based food interventions, which are food procurement and healthy eating initiatives offered by a non-profit/charitable or health organization. While some community-based food interventions (such as Good Food Box or Fruit and Vegetable Market programs) target underserved groups, AFNs have been criticized as marginalizing people of lower socioeconomic status. Therefore, the extent to which the urban poor are marginalized from or are in fact participating in emerging alternative networks is unclear because AFNs in urban areas have been under-studied.

This study is part of a larger critical ethnographic study of household food practices in Saskatoon's inner city. The full project includes 1) CIHR/SHRF funded qualitative critical ethnographic research of household food practices of low-income households living in Saskatoon's inner city, 2) a quantitative smartphone mediated study of diet, food procurement and travel patterns of low-income inner city residents of Saskatoon, 3) the study being discussed here which focuses in on household food practices of Indigenous residents of Saskatoon's inner city. This study, in conjunction with the first, uses multiple interviews, informal observation and photography to examine household food practices).

This project has led to further initiatives, a meeting with Northern Saskatchewan Trappers' Association Cooperative to discuss their work in conjunction with Indigenous food sovereignty work being conducted in and around Saskatoon was held and planning with them (and others) for the filming of a short education documentary film on how country foods make their way into Saskatoon and who is being fed by this food. Meetings with Beardy's Okemasis First Nation to discuss their efforts, both on reserve and in the city, to provide their members with healthy foods. This has led to some preliminary meetings discussing future research ideas. They are also going to be participating in the filming of the documentary film, along with the community of La Loche.

The partners specific to the UAKN were new to us and we sought them out on the guidance of some of our long-time partners (CHEP Good Food Inc in particular). Engaging in this research has led to new partnerships with Beardy's Okemasis First Nation and our participation in a burgeoning Indigenous food sovereignty network here in Saskatchewan.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- 1) Participants are enhancers and contributors in alternative food networks. For example, households in the core of Saskatoon are using their own kitchens and sheds for cleaning, butchering, organizing and distributing wild meat.
- 2) Traditional and wild foods are supplementing varying levels of food insecurity and injustice, fostering mechanisms for resistance and elements of resilience.
- 3) Over two thirds of our 26 households indicated they receive food from family.
- 4) More than three quarters indicated that they share food with family.
- 5) Households that use maximum visits to food bank (2 times per month) also have household diets that include food from trappers, hunters and other producers.
- 6) Barter and trade is occurring for foods procured through kinship and social networks (ex. cleaning supplies sent back as trade for country foods).

While we had a sense of the complexity of household food practices, and particularly food procurement, we did not expect to find the degree of complexity and variation in procurement and other practices that we have found. In addition, while we knew we would hear difficult life stories with regards to food and possible trauma, the extent of this was much greater than we expected.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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Food is our language – Reconnecting Youth to Culture through Indigenous Food Sovereignty: An exploration into the role of youth engaging in traditional food and cultural skills impacts cultural identity and self-esteem

Dr. Jaime Cidro, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg, Neechi Commons Inc. and Garden City Collegiate



Food and culture are indelibly linked. Cultural food, from growing and harvesting to preparing requires a connection to traditional culture. For inner city youth, it can be challenging to have access not only to cultural food, but to the skills and knowledge around the process of acquiring and processing it. This research will explore how prolonged participation in a variety of land based and urban activities centered around traditional food skills and grounded in principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty impacts the self-esteem and cultural identity of Indigenous youth living in Winnipeg's inner city. Specifically, we will be exploring: the relationship that Indigenous youth in Winnipeg's inner city have with their cultural food; how participation in cultural activities centered around cultural food impacts their identity and how they value themselves as Indigenous youth in the city; and the ways organizations and schools can use principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty as a basis for cultural identity development and subsequently positive personal development for youth.

Winnipeg has the highest proportion of urban Indigenous people in the country, and youth are increasingly disenfranchised from their own culture and identity. Food is connected to culture, and in urban communities' access to traditional food can be further challenged along with the skills associated with growing, harvesting and preparing traditional food. Food insecurity certainly exists in urban centres for Aboriginal communities. In 2013, we conducted preliminary research which found that Aboriginal people in the city experienced food insecurity, but were also working towards larger goals of what is being called "Indigenous Food Sovereignty" (IFS) with regards to cultural food specifically (Cidro et al., 2014). The second phase of our project focussed on operationalizing IFS principles to determine whether traditional food skills would result in a change in the relationship to food. Our preliminary analysis has shown indeed when urban Indigenous people are equipped with the skills and knowledge around traditional food, then how they view not only their circumstances around food security shifts, but also the relationship they have with food and their health. Participants indicated that while they appreciated learning about these skills through participating in action based research, they felt that these were skills that had they learned earlier in their life, could have (a) resulted in changes in eating behavior and subsequently improved health, and (b) reduced food insecurity for themselves and their household, and (c) had an enhanced understanding of their own traditional culture, which has its own set of positive social and spiritual benefits. Our participants encouraged us to examine the role of traditional food skills over a longer period of time with Indigenous youth in the inner-city. Food is conduit to culture. As one of our participants noted, "food is our language".

## CURRENT STATUS

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



Youth Participants January 2016 Workshop

# Youth Homelessness: Including the voices of youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in northern Manitoba

Dr. Marleny M. Bonnycastle, University of Manitoba; Dr. Maureen Simpkins, University College of the North; Boys and Girls Club of Thompson; Keewatin Tribal Council, Youth Wellness and Education; Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre; MacDonald Youth Services; Northern Health Region - Aboriginal Health Services; Pride North of 55; R.D Parker High School Youth Aboriginal Council; and Thompson Youth Build.

Much attention has been directed toward the issue of homelessness in northern Manitoba. Thus, several new transitional facilities have opened their doors in 2014. Recent studies suggest that the youth homeless population often remains invisible to the general population and to policy makers because they tend to move from apartment to apartment couch surfing and they tend to keep to themselves. There are currently few options for youth to find a safe and comfortable place to live. Rents are high in Thompson and apartments are difficult to rent especially for Aboriginal youth.

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

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

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

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

High number of homeless or at risk are Indigenous youth, female youth, youth aging out of foster care, high involvement with criminal justice, not attending school or working, no shelter for homeless youth, very few services for homeless youth, high percentage are from outlining communities and another major reason for homelessness is dysfunction in the family.

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



**Hiphop Workshop with youth 2016**

The intent of this project is to conduct research that creates the space to collaboratively and respectfully work with homeless and at risk youth so their knowledge and life experience can be heard by and taken into account by service providers and policy makers as well as the wider Thompson community. On a broader scale, we want to promote the process of participatory research to action with policy stakeholders with the end result being positive changes regarding social policies as they impact Aboriginal youth.

Ultimately this project will contribute to solutions for youth homelessness that will be beneficial not only for youth, but for northern Manitoba. Several community-based participatory research activities including the creation of an advisory committee, the development of an inventory of community services, programs and resources for youth as well as activities such as community café consultations, photovoice and mapping.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

**Dr. Alex Wilson, Associate Professor, Educational Foundations University of Saskatchewan; Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc. ;Out Saskatoon; Prince Albert Q-Network and TransSask Support Services, Inc.**

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

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

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## MITE ACHIMOWIN (HEART TALK) RESEARCH PROJECT

The project's title: Mite Achimowin means 'heart talk' in Cree. The mite (heart) achimowin (talk) concepts carry wisdom of teachings that involve connections between a person's physical body, mind and spirit. Mite Achimowin is an arts based research and knowledge transfer project that is founded through the digital stories of First Nations women's concepts of heart. The research team collectively brings expertise in linguistics, history, health, and community-based research methodologies to this innovative decolonizing research study.

The question that the researchers seek to resolve is: *"What is the knowledge held by First Nations women, their culture and language on caring for one's heart; how has that way of being been disrupted; and can Indigenized methods of communication relate that understanding to euro--- medicine and First Nations communities?"*

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

- 1) To use oral history and arts---based research approaches to explore culturally--rooted knowledge concerning and oppressive mechanisms influencing the caring for one's heart among FN women;
- 2) To use a conversational research approach to explore mechanisms for integrating culturally--- rooted knowledge of the heart into undergraduate and graduate curriculums.

Up to eight First Nations women will make digital stories over the course of a week on their experience of caring for one's heart. We will create a safe space to discuss factors that negatively impact the well--- being of FN such as transitions from traditional to westernized lifestyles and diets; poverty; poor access to quality foods; the legacy of residential schools; racism; culturally unsafe care; and economic and geographic marginalization. Expressions, as digital stories, of the FN women's experiences, thoughts, and knowledge of caring for one's heart will provide an opportunity to share and express themselves within community; rather than participate in a one--- way extracting research process (such as interviews).

The second phase of the study will initiate dialogues with euro---western human service providers and within First Nations to extend our collective understanding of how to care for one's heart. Learning circles with undergraduate and graduate students will inform strategies to integrate culturally---rooted knowledge in relevant curriculum. The study will create a webpage to support distribution of digital stories and study learnings. The choice to participate in learning circles and digital story sharing resides with the FN women storytellers.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Urban Aboriginal Postsecondary Student Experience: Facilitators and Inhibitors of Learning Environments for Maximum Potential

Isobel M. Findlay, Professor Emerita, Management and Marketing, Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan, Office of Treaty Commissioner, Indigenous Voices Programs, Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness, Indigenous Graduate Students' Council, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Saskatchewan Polytechnic First Nations University of Canada

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of urban Aboriginal postsecondary students in Saskatoon, to identify facilitators and inhibitors of learning environments for the maximum potential of those students. Building on literature in other jurisdictions (Brown, Knol, & Fraehlich, 2008; Embleton, 2011; Helme & Lamb, 2011; Silver, Klyne, & Simard, 2003), the proposed study will establish baseline data on factors that either facilitate or hinder educational success at Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, First Nations University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and University of Saskatchewan.

## KEY QUESTIONS

- How do urban Aboriginal postsecondary students rate their postsecondary educational experience?
- What do urban Aboriginal postsecondary students consider major barriers to their educational success?
- What do urban Aboriginal postsecondary students consider key factors that contribute to their educational success?

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Wahkohtowin: Learning Together about Justice and Injustice in the City

Nancy Van Styvendale, Assistant Professor, English, University of Saskatchewan; Priscilla Settee, Associate Professor, Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan; Sarah Buhler, Assistant Professor, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan; and Stan Tu'Inukuafe, Social Worker, Oskayak High School and Coordinator, STR8 UP.

The "Wahkohtowin: Learning Together about Justice and Injustice in the City," project brings together university students from Law, English, Indigenous Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies with students from "outside" the university—specifically, Indigenous youth from Oskayak High School and former gang members from STR8 UP, a gang prevention organization. This work builds upon an earlier project, funded by UAKN in 2013, and contributes significant new research to one of UAKN's core research themes: social cohesion (community well-being, education, justice). The 2013 project titled, Learning Together: Str8Up, Oskayak High School, and the University of Saskatchewan final paper and key findings can be found here: [uakn.org/research-project/learning-together-str8up-oskayak-high-school-and-the-university-of-saskatchewan/](http://uakn.org/research-project/learning-together-str8up-oskayak-high-school-and-the-university-of-saskatchewan/)

Together, through relationship building, storytelling, and place-based educational practices with our students, we will cultivate analyses of injustice and justice in the city of Saskatoon, as well as forging critical pedagogy that unites Indigenous, feminist, and community-based methodologies. In addition to offering the 8 week class in the fall of 2016, the project includes a community-engaged research symposium and a specific research output—a collaboratively produced digital narrative map, which will highlight stories of justice and injustice in Saskatoon and serve as a resource for future education in both university and community contexts.

## **BUILDING FROM THE LEARNING TOGETHER PROJECT**

This project aims to understand participants' knowledge and personal experience of injustice in the city, including the realities of poverty, food and housing insecurity, gentrification and the privatization of space, and interpersonal and institutional violence, particularly against Indigenous women, girls, and the LGBTQ2S community. This project also aims to explore the city as a site of resistance and social justice—from community gardens and Idle No More round dances to organizations like Str8Up and Oskayak High School themselves, which, through gang prevention and Indigenous education, respectively, typify the many ways in which "justice" is enacted in our city.

## **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

- The pedagogical model we have developed in partnership with STR8 UP and Oskayak High School is effective. The digital map created will be a tool to share the powerful stories and experiences that came out of this class - it will help tell the stories about colonialism and resistance to colonialism in the urban context of Saskatoon.
- Community-engaged teaching based on Indigenous models is an important intervention in dominant university pedagogy.
- Story telling about impacts of colonialism in urban contexts is a powerful tool to share these stories upon completion of our creative project.

*Community Driven Approach: Through the Wahkohtowin model, a unique pedagogy that brings together students from distinct groups—those inside the university and those historically excluded from it—we also seek to contribute to knowledge about community-engaged educational initiatives and continue our work of making the university more accessible to Indigenous and often marginalized youth.*

This project is a teaching and research project, a one-semester long class facilitated in the fall term of 2016 is now complete. The class brought together students from the University of Saskatchewan (Law, English and Indigenous Studies) with members of STR8 UP (a group that works with former members of gangs) and Oskayak High School. A key aspect of the class was the creation by the class of a “digital justice map” of Saskatoon, bringing together art and stories that tell stories of justice and injustice in relation to colonialism in Saskatoon.



Wahkohtowin Project 2016 Group Photo

The creation of a maps tool to display this is underway. Ongoing relationships are strong with the community partners involved and the Wahkohtowin project will continue due to the importance of this project to our community partners.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Collaborative Processes and Co-Creation for Supporting Urban Movers in Transition

Lalita A. Bharadwaj, School of Public Health (SPH), University of Saskatchewan, Graham Strickert, SENS, Engagement Specialist, Lori Bradford, SPH, Data Analyst, Knowledge Mobilization Specialist, Kenneth Williams, George Gordon First Nation, Dept. of Drama, Playwright in Residence

Collaborative Processes and Co-Creation for Supporting *Urban Movers* in Transition Urbanization influences the transformation of Indigenous cultures around the world (King, Smith and Gracey, 2009). As of 2006, migration of Indigenous people in Canada changed significantly from half a century earlier; more than half of identified Indigenous people lived in cities, versus only 6.7% in 1951 (Norris, Clatworthy, and Peters, 2013). This migration has vast effects on *human development* and *social cohesion* of individuals and families moving away from traditional lands (Letkemann, 2004; Wilson and Peters, 2005; Norris, Clatworthy and Peters, 2013). To develop identity and a sense of community in the urban Aboriginal context, there are two needs; decolonization as a reaffirmation of the current identity of a person and/or group, and having resources available to support the emerging context of life so a person or group may become that to which they aspire (Andersen, 2013). The supports existing in cities are based on helping the urban mover adapt to urban society – in short, colonizing movers. Urban movers, however want to maintain their attachments to

reserve communities; retain their Indigenous identity; and, participate in a similar community life to that on reserve (Ponting, 2005; Distasio, Sylvestre and Wall-Wieler, 2016). Identity maintenance needs support from Federations, Tribal Councils, non- profit organizations, and Band urban services offices in Saskatchewan.

Little research exists as to how and when urban services are accessed and whether these services and formats are effective. There is also a need for identifying ways to enhance social cohesion and identity maintenance for urban movers. Facilitating the connection between urban service programs, and formal and informal supports on reserves will augment wellbeing for urban movers.

This project will explore the access, effectiveness, potential for, and processes of collaboration among urban service providers for urban movers. Our proposal includes Indigenous methodologies and a co-created knowledge mobilization product that will be developed across interdisciplinary collaboration on campus, and with service providers themselves.

Three reports will be developed for the federation and service providers that align with the proposed journal articles as per below. These reports will be living documents that expand as reflection occurs and new insights are generated. The reports describe:

1. The case study and process of collaboration including successes and challenges.
2. The effectiveness of the video for sharing knowledge of urban movers' use of services.
3. The lessons learned for enhancing support services provided in urban areas, and how they can be developed to maintain and enhance identity and social cohesion.

Second, to share the results of the project with *policy makers and academics*, the PDF and graduate student(s) will present at a conference, and will publish three papers:

1. Describing the case study and process of collaboration (target journal: AlterNative)
2. Describing the effectiveness of the video for sharing knowledge of transition services (target journal: International Journal of Qualitative Methodologies)
3. The meta-level lessons on enhancing policy and processes for supporting identity and social cohesion for urban movers (target journal: Pimatisiwin)

Third, to share results with the *general public*, we will host an open house which will include a viewing of the video with an accompanying talk by agents from service providers. Using these three methods of knowledge mobilization we will be able to share the learning among urban movers and support agencies (government and non- government organizations), academics and other researchers, and the general public.

## CURRENT STATUS

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



# The Indigenization of Housing First: A Culturally Responsive Approach to Understanding and Addressing Homelessness in Winnipeg's Urban Aboriginal Community

Jino Distasio, University of Winnipeg

This research examines urban Aboriginal homelessness and its effect on the overall wellbeing and social cohesiveness of peoples living in Winnipeg. Using a community-centered approach, we seek to document and analyze how Winnipeg adapted the mainstream Housing First model to reflect the local Indigenous context. Housing First, briefly defined, emerged as a response to end chronic homelessness in the United States, Canada, and other parts of the Western world, by providing permanent housing with supports to those experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

In 2009, the Federal Government funded the 6-year, \$150 million dollar At Home/Chez Soi (AHCS) research demonstration project to deliver housing and support programs. One of the hallmarks of the Winnipeg Site was the adaptation of the Housing First model to the local context, centering on Indigenous leadership, perspectives, and beliefs through all aspects of the project. This project will reflect on the early design and implementation of the Indigenous components of the Winnipeg Site of the AHCS project and further explore the processes of the early relationship building and development phase as well as the governance structure necessary to localize and adapt the project.

## KEY QUESTIONS

1. What processes defined the relationship building phase among a range of stakeholders, including local members of the community, government, the homeless service sector, and specifically the Indigenous community, at the Winnipeg Site who came together to launch the AHCS project?
2. How did this relationship-building process influence the subsequent development of a unique governance and program structure that localized a culturally responsive adaptation of the Housing First model in Winnipeg?
3. At the Winnipeg Site, the approach to governance was underpinned by a shared, community-driven, Indigenous-centered understanding of Housing First. How did this approach contribute to broader capacity building, which in turn contributed to the successful implementation of the demonstration project, and did this impact ongoing sustainability?
4. What Winnipeg experiences can inform broader adaptation of the housing first in Canada and within Indigenous communities and are there distinct policy implications?

## CURRENT STATUS

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

# Examining a Community-Based Theatre Program as a Source of Resilience and Well-being among Indigenous youth in Saskatoon

Andrew R. Hatala, PhD University of Saskatchewan Department of Community Health and Epidemiology,  
Oseims Isbister-Bear, Executive Director of Gordon Tootoosis Nikā nīwin Theatre

Indigenous youth populations in Canada are rapidly growing and continually face health inequities. To address these issues, this project explores the relationships between participation in arts-based theatre programs and resilience and wellness outcomes for Indigenous youth living in urban contexts. Within this framework, our research approach is grounded in a “two-eyed seeing” community-based participatory context where Indigenous community and academic expertise collaborate to co-execute research objectives. Two-eyed seeing holds that there are diverse understandings of the world and that by acknowledging and respecting a diversity of perspectives (without perpetuating the dominance of one over another) we can build an understanding of health and wellness that lends itself to dealing with some of the most pressing issues facing Indigenous youth today. A transformative framework also draws on critical Indigenous and anti-oppressive theories that focus attention on the political and moral concerns arising from the history of colonialism, and how this history shapes the everyday experiences of those who have been marginalized. At the same time, this lens focuses on revealing cultural strengths, local Indigenous knowledge, and positive aspects of a community that are needed to promote resilience, health equity, improved well-being, and social change.

There is extensive data detailing the health inequities experienced by Canadian Indigenous populations, the goal of our research is to move beyond descriptions of Indigenous health inequities towards examinations of a community-based theatre program and its impact on the resilience and well-being of Indigenous youth in an urban context.

## KEY QUESTIONS

- How can community-based theatre programs facilitate processes of resilience and wellbeing among Indigenous youth in urban Canadian contexts?
- How can community-based theater programs facilitate decolonization and empowerment at embodied levels of youth experience?
- How can traditional Indigenous forms of culture be integrated into arts-based theatre programs that support resilience and well-being outcomes for Indigenous youth in urban contexts?

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# The Impacts of the Criminalization of HIV Non-Disclosure on Indigenous People Living with HIV/AIDS: An Urban Case Study of Regina and Prince Albert

Dr. Emily Snyder, Assistant Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Women's & Gender Studies Program, University of Saskatchewan and All Nations Hope Network (ANHN)

This research aims to identify and understand the leading impacts of laws about HIV non-disclosure are having on Indigenous people in the urban centre of Regina, the implications of these laws for HIV/AIDS community organizations providing services to Indigenous people in this urban centre, the needs and recommendations from Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS and from HIV/AIDS organizations working with Indigenous people, policy and legal responses that centre Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in relation to an urban context and a base of relevant information from which future research directions can be created.

## KEY QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the impacts of criminal laws about HIV non-disclosure on Indigenous people living with HIV or AIDS in Regina?
- 2) What do people living with HIV, and community organizations working with them need and recommend regarding these laws?

These questions are purposefully broad to survey the key issues at stake. Sub-questions include: How are these impacts and needs gendered? Do they differ for the Indigenous 2LGBTQ community? What do Indigenous people living with HIV or AIDS in Regina know about criminal laws concerning disclosure of HIV status to sexual partners? What do people want in terms of legal resources, changes, or policy responses?

The overall goal with this project is to create research where the priorities of Indigenous people living with HIV/AIDS are listened to and respected. Indigenous people are the experts of their experiences and needs. This project also recognizes and respects the expertise of ANHN and aims to create a project that is meaningfully based on that expertise and their goals. This research is focused on meaningful change for community members and aims to give back through research informed by Indigenous knowledge. In addition to drawing on Indigenous research methodologies and following appropriate Indigenous protocols in this work, the intention with the policy recommendations is to articulate those in ways that work for Indigenous people and work to challenge settler-colonial impositions of policies and laws on Indigenous peoples. Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are the starting points for this research, and that includes self-determination related to the body, sexuality, and law.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

# 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 de Quebec. There are currently 7 funded research projects and 1 youth symposium in the central region to report on.

## Rekindling the Learning Spirit: Encouraging Successful Learning Outcomes for Urban Indigenous Youth

Amy Champagne, Trent University, Odawa Native Friendship Centre, Urban Aboriginal Alternate High School Program (UAAHSP)

This project will explore the tensions between Indigenous and Western notions of successful education, and how these tensions impact the teaching and evaluation of Indigenous students in provincially-funded schools in Ontario. This project will conduct a case study of the *Aboriginal Education Strategy* is the *Alternative Secondary School Programs within Native Friendship Centres Program* (ASSP) in Ottawa, Ontario to explore the research questions.

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre (OFIFC) reports that the ASSP has been found to play a crucial role in the educational success of many “at-risk” urban Indigenous youth. However, it is important to determine whether the ASSP promotes success and positive learning outcomes as defined by Indigenous peoples themselves. Existing program evaluations focus almost exclusively on whether or not the ASSP is helping students achieve Western standards of success. The integration of Indigenous pedagogies must be extended to assessment and evaluation as well, since assessment approaches are part of an overall pedagogical framework. If Indigenous teaching and learning strategies are used in the ASSP, the only accurate way to evaluate the learning achieved through these pedagogies is by using assessment approaches grounded in the same pedagogies.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Indigenous knowledge-holders, what is the meaning of educational success, which learning outcomes are desired, and how should learning be assessed? Does the pedagogy of the ASSP encourage success and positive learning outcomes as defined by Indigenous peoples themselves, and how can assessment and evaluation approaches be adapted to reflect Indigenous theories of educational success?

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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## An examination of how the Anishinaabe smudging ceremony is integrated in Northeastern Ontario hospitals

Amy Shawanda, Trent University

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding of how the Anishinaabe smudging ceremony is accommodated within four urban hospitals in Northeastern Ontario. Specifically, it will examine the smudging ceremony and how it is integrated into policies through an analytical comparative framework. By utilizing a comparative analysis, the research will reveal how the smudging ceremony is accommodated within the hospitals and it will provide greater insight into understanding the shifting relationship between Indigenous peoples and health service providers in Canada today.

The journey will explore the current realities of First Nations peoples, smudging policies, and see which hospitals accommodate the smudging ceremony. Waldram, Herring, and Young discuss the re-emergence of Indigenous ceremony within urban institutions and state, "it has become fairly common in hospitals, clinics, and other institutions in many parts of Canada to see an Indigenous practitioner undertaking a ceremony for a patient" (2006, p. 238). The aim of this study is to examine the smudging policies and what the smudging ceremony challenges are that each hospital encounters. Although, comparative analysis is in opposition to storytelling, the policies in place affect the people differently, at different institutions, in different locations. The purpose is to compare the policies and stories to see how the policies are employed within each hospital.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Which urban hospitals in Northeastern Ontario have smudging policies in place?  
What are the policies of Northeastern Ontario hospitals with regard to smudging?  
How were the policies enacted? Are there any policy gaps within each hospital?

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Teacher, listen to me! Voices of Southern Ontario Urban First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Youth

Dr. Nicole Bell, Trent University

This project aims at hearing the voices of urban First Nation, Metis, and Inuit youth, whose voices are not often advocated for, and applying their shared experiences to educational change. The entire research project consists of exploring these questions with urban and rural First Nation, Metis and Inuit youth in six urban and rural centres across Ontario (north central, north east, north west, south central, south east, south west). This project will study the areas of Ottawa, Toronto, London and further funding will be sought for the remaining three northern urban centres (Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Thunder Bay).

To further address the needs of off-reserve Indigenous students in Ontario attending publically funded schools, it is necessary to acquire the voices of those students. The student perspective is needed to underscore the importance of hearing their stories and giving them the opportunity to inform teachers of best practices. By creating a discourse with these students we will begin to understand how to meet the needs of all Indigenous students in Ontario, and close the pervasive learning gap that continues to exist.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the urban First Nation, Metis, and Inuit youth experience in public schooling and what can the education system learn from it? Exploring this question will help us determine what is working for these students and what needs still remain for them. We also want to provide an opportunity for urban First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students to voice what teachers need to know to make the educational experience better for them. The end goal is for urban First Nation, Metis, and Inuit youth to provide voice for their schooling experience to inform teacher practice to ensure their success for future endeavors as global citizens.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Where Have We Come From? History Project

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre - OFIFC

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Where Are We Now? Service Delivery Project

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre - OFIFC, Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Untied Native Friendship Centre (Fort Francis), Niagara Regional Native Centre (Niagara-on-the-Lake), N'Amerind Friendship Centre (London), Indian Friendship Centre (Sault Ste. Marie), Peel Aboriginal Network, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre

This project examines 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 has spent many years refining culture based practices of governance and leadership, but they have never been documented or analyzed. The OFIFC has been meeting with key Indigenous leaders to document valuable

stories and wise practices that provide insight into how influential Indigenous people exercise leadership within Friendship Centres and other 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.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Preliminary review of primary data includes: tangible strategies to encourage youth to transform Indigenous community organizing; intersections between organizational management approaches and traditional leadership practices; as well as community partnership building strategies to increase Indigenous peoples' economic, social, and cultural contributions to their communities and beyond. A report on urban Indigenous leadership is expected in 2017 and examines the intersections between the OFIFC's "Where are We?" and "Where Are We Going" projects.

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

***Community Driven Research Approach: Integral to this research project was to approach this work in a culturally appropriate way. Researchers focused on relationship building with all participating Indigenous leaders, ensuring to follow OFIFC's cultural practices, which add tremendous value to the overall quality of research.***

As a result of this project, Indigenous leaders have been mobilizing around the topic of leadership and the importance of documenting wise practices around Indigenous knowledge transmission as well as culture-based organizational management. Many Indigenous leaders also spoke about the value of investing in Indigenous youth leadership in urban Indigenous communities throughout Ontario.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## Where Are We Going? Youth Project

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres - OFIFC, Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, N'Swakamok Friendship Centre, Dryden Native Friendship Centre, CanAm Indian Friendship Centre of Windsor

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

This project will engage urban Indigenous youth in Ontario including youth from the OFIFC regional structure (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest) and has been coordinated by OFIFC Research team. The focus of this project is to document the stories and experiences of diverse urban Indigenous youth and identify wise practices that have facilitated in the cultivation of leadership skills. In addition, Indigenous youth involved 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 are important parts of this research. The youth determined that they would like to approach the leadership project using multi-media tools to document their experiences in their communities. Four Friendship Centre communities are driving this project including: Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Dryden, and Windsor. The OFIFC's youth board representatives from these communities were sponsored by the OFIFC as community leads for the project. OFIFC youth representatives developed, organized, and led a youth leadership event in their local Friendship Centre community, with the ongoing support of the OFIFC. The OFIFC has collected and compiled this data, which is informing the development of a preliminary analysis for an OFIFC report and publication on leadership as well as a video on leadership that is being created in collaboration with an Indigenous filmmaker. A report on urban Indigenous leadership is expected in 2017 and examines the intersections between the OFIFC's "Where are We?" and "Where Are We Going" projects.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

# 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.



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

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

Dr. Kevin Fitzmaurice, University of Sudbury, Indigenous Studies - KINXUS; and Suzanne Shawbonquit, Aboriginal Urban Resources Sudbury

This research idea came directly from the KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources '212' Economic Success Initiative. This research project seeks to better understand the dynamics of urban Aboriginal community life and the factors that lead to Aboriginal people's success in Sudbury. The following three questions were at the heart of the research:

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

## PROJECT GOALS

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

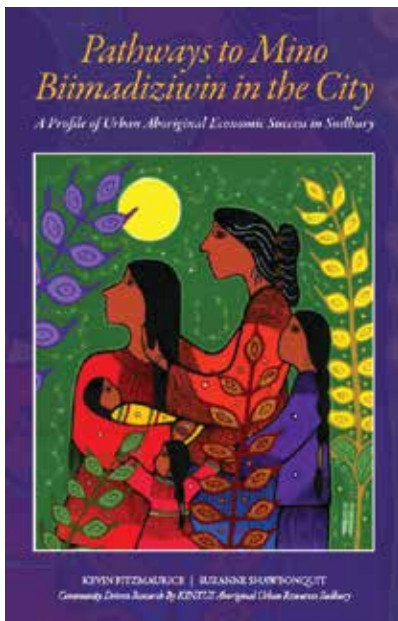
## EMERGING ECONOMIC SUCCESS KEY FUTURE INSPIRATIONS

Preliminary findings reveal that emerging themes towards economic success is greater access to language and cultural education, particularly for their children. Increased Aboriginal education within the provincial school system, including language instruction and an increased understanding and acceptance by non-Aboriginal society is needed to help end systemic and internal racism.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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



*Kevin Fitzmaurice, professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Sudbury, and Suzanne Shawbonquit, chair of KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources, launched their new study, "Pathways to Mino Biimadziwin in the City: A Profile of Urban Aboriginal Economic Success in Sudbury" on Jan. 13 at the Fromagerie Elgin. Photo by Arron Pickard.*

Link for the book: [uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/US\\_IS\\_Pathways\\_Book\\_2016.pdf](http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/US_IS_Pathways_Book_2016.pdf)

Retrieved from: [sudbury.com/local-news/finding-the-pathways-to-success-for-aboriginal-people-511177](http://sudbury.com/local-news/finding-the-pathways-to-success-for-aboriginal-people-511177)

# UAKN ATLANTIC



The UAKN Atlantic operates out of the Faculty of Education at UNB Fredericton, New Brunswick. Dr. Verlé Harrop is the Director of the UAKN Atlantic and reports to an Executive Committee representative of the four Atlantic Provinces. Member composition of the Executive Committee follows SSHRC guidelines and includes urban Aboriginal community members and groups, elders, emerging Aboriginal scholars, academics, practitioners and government representatives. Working by consensus, the 13-member committee sets UAKN Atlantic's research priorities and ensures that the community-driven research they support meets the needs and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples living across Atlantic Canada. Presently, the UAKN Atlantic has over 20 funded research projects and counting! There are currently 6 completed research projects to report on.

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## UAKN ATLANTIC COMPLETED PROJECTS

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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 StFX University and Pamela Glode-Desrochers Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre Halifax, Nova Scotia, with research assistance from Janelle Young and Killa Atencio

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

## KEY FINDINGS

- Urban Indigenous experiences of wellness, wellbeing and justice are complex, gendered, and diverse;
- The Friendship Centre serves critical kinship functions by providing a “safe” and “healing” place;
- Service gaps are exacerbated by compartmentalized approaches to healing;
- Significant need for education programs and experiential learning opportunities to engage with Indigenous ways of knowing and being;
- Holistic trauma and post residential school supports are lacking;
- Culturally relevant assessment / mapping tools are critical to building effective navigation support services;
- The MNFC is a site of reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous peoples through its cultural exchange and healing programs and these programs need ongoing support.

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS

A community-driven approach to research ensures that knowledge is translated into action by building capacity among participants. This research was undertaken to assist the Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Centre 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. Additionally, the findings suggest that the MNFC is an important site for cultural reconciliation and for building alliances to break down the systemic discriminatory barriers that interfere with opportunities for and experiences of wellbeing among urban Indigenous populations. Throughout this research the participants positively identify the MNFC, its staff and programs, as culturally significant sources of hope, healing and belonging. These elements are recognized as essential to their wellbeing, wellness and self-determination.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Urban Aboriginal Populations and the Honour of the Crown

**Dr. Jula Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB; Roy Stewart, JD Candidate, Faculty of Law, UNB; Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Centre; Native Council of PEI; Under One Sky Head Start; New Brunswick Aboriginal People’s Council; Government of New Brunswick - Department of Social Development Government of New Brunswick - Employment and Continuous Learning Services**

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

## MAIN FINDINGS

- It is apparent from the discussion of case law describing the circumstance of the duty to consult, that the duty to consult has so far been explored in the context of land based and land based rights.
- These rights are important to urban Aboriginal people who continue to hunt, harvest, hunt, fish, and live off the land at various times. However, other rights may be equally or more important to these populations in the long run, including personal property, linguistic, and cultural rights.
- However, it is a question within the jurisprudence whether a duty to consult could extend to urban Aboriginal populations separately, or to situations where government is under an affirmative obligation to provide a service, or where government has historically provided service that is now altering or abandoning.
- Whether a constitutional duty to consult in any of these outlined areas or others is ultimately found, government consultation should be encouraged for reasons of reconciliation and because stakeholder consultation is an important element of good governance practice.
- This study examines on how a better approach to achieving reconciliation is by reaching a settlement through good faith negotiations by both parties, without resorting to litigation.
- Important to consider that the majority of Aboriginal people in Canada live off reserve, and their interests do not always align with the interests of on-reserve populations.
- The questions about who resides on and off reserve and the question of membership both deeply implicates some of the discriminatory policies of the past, thus invoking the Honour of the Crown.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

Dr. Jula Hughes, Faculty of Law, UNB; Roy Stewart, JD Candidate, Faculty of Law, UNB; With the Governments of Canada and New Brunswick & Reserve-Based First Nation Band Councils & Members; Chief Wendy Wetteland, Elder Gary Gould, Dr. Elizabeth Blaney, and Sacha Boies- Novak

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

## KEY FINDINGS

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

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Women's Narratives from the St. John's Native Friendship Centre: Using Digital Storytelling to Inform Community-based Healing and Violence Prevention

Ashley Hong, MSc Candidate Faculty of Medicine, Division of Community Health and Humanities Memorial University; Breannah Tulk, Community Lead Community Programs Coordinator St. John's Native Friendship Centre (SJNFC); Emma Relis, Elder; Rebecca Sharr, SJNFC staff member, Amelia Reimer, SJNFC staff member, Chris Sheppard, SJNFC Executive Director, Dr. Fern Brunger, Memorial University

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

## KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Education and Training

- Peer Healing: Increase number of members who are trained in crisis intervention and violence prevention.
- Allow women to provide recommendations to NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, because they feel their needs are not recognized.
- Continue educating and promoting Indigenous cultures in the wider St. John's community.

- Develop a resource manual that would assist women in accessing materials or other programming across the St. John's area
- Develop a resource manual that focuses on reconciliation and that addresses Canada's colonial history: promote strong relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in NL and Labrador.

### **Economic Development**

- Hire a professional to assist members in job searches and career services. Women discussed feelings of disappointment over the closure of the Employment Resource Centre, including the loss of computers.
- Bridge gap between individuals moving to St. John's for the first time, specifically for individuals that may be experiencing culture shock (e.g. employment, educational, and housing assistance).

### **Programs and Services**

- Tea and Sharing: Women discussed the feeling of wanting to attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but due to conflicting schedules, they could not attend. When possible, allow for more flexibility for multiple generations to spend time together (e.g. Elders and Youth program).
- Yoga and Zumba: Provide transparency to women as to why "non-Indigenous" programs are offered. This caused some confusion for women; greater transparency is needed to address how funding is allocated.
- Land-based Healing: Implement programs that allow families to get back on to the land to practice traditional activities and healing.
- Elders' Programs: Create trauma/strength-based programs that allow women and men who attended Residential/Day Schools to gather together.
- Family-based programs: When possible, include intergenerational programs and services (especially retreats).
- Networking: Create a pan networking/trading group that would allow members to access traditional teachings (e.g. workshops, online resources, teacher guests for crafts/singing/dancing).
- Use trauma-informed approaches to healing.
- Continue to carry out programs on a case-per-case basis; each person has unique and complex needs.
- Art Program: Continue to support local artists and expand art showcase.
- Healing Circles: Continue to hold sharing circles, increase frequency if possible.

### **Traditional Materials/Medicines**

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

Webinar Recording Available: [uakn.org/webinar-womens-narratives-from-the-st-johns-native-friendship-centre](https://uakn.org/webinar-womens-narratives-from-the-st-johns-native-friendship-centre)

## **CURRENT STATUS**

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

Thesis publication is forthcoming and online resources for the SJNFC website are being developed in addition to the creation of 4 digital story films.

*Being community driven, this project also met goals of the SJNFC by identifying needs, strategies, and challenges for violence prevention services, create a tool for violence healing strategies for the SJNFC and to make recommendations for community-based healing and violence prevention programming for the wider St. John's community.*

*Just let them literally get it all out, and that is healing, right? So that's what this storytelling thing was really about, and that's why I felt it was such a powerful exercise because you actually gave them a platform to just let it all out, and it was... you know...you never heard that about her. Maybe nobody has ever asked her.*

-Digital Storytelling Participant

## RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY

One of the most important research results of this project - as was noted by several women who took part in the process - was the process itself, the three days we spent together laughing, crying, smudging, drumming, and singing. That experience will never again be replicated. That process was the healing. The final outcome or the final film may be one aspect of the healing journey, but the type of healing and collaboration that takes place during the digital storytelling process is the medicine. The healing comes from the circle and it comes from women gathering. Whether we are sharing in a circle while sewing, knitting, beading, or making films, the knowledge sharing and the healing process are not shaped solely by one particular activity, but rather through the entire process.

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

Dr. Jane P. Preston, University of Prince Edward Island; Carolyn Taylor, Native Council of Prince Edward Island; Darrell DesRoches, Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; and Alanna Taylor, Cox and Palmer Prince Edward Island, and Brittany Jakubiec, Research assistant.

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

## KEY FINDINGS

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

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



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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## Navigating Government Services: The “lived experience” of young urban Aboriginal families residing in Fredericton, NB

Lisa Jodoin, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, University of New Brunswick; Research Team: Dr. Ann Sherman, Dean Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick; Patsy McKinney, Executive Director, Under One Sky Head Start; Jenny Perley, Community Researcher; Carla Gregan-Burns, Regional Director, Region 3 Department of Social Development; Gary Gould, General Manager, Skigin-Elnoog Housing Corporation; Wendy Wetteland, President and Chief, New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council; Amanda LeBlanc, Vice Chief, New Brunswick Aboriginal People's Council; and Joanne Marquis-Charron, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. Dr. Verlé Harrop, Director, UAKN Atlantic, and Anthea Plummer, Research Associate.

## KEY FINDINGS

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

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

*There have been and continue to be some wonderful programs, services, and organizations working to meet the needs of Fredericton’s urban Aboriginal community. By working together, government and community organizations can reach an even higher level of success. Strengthening communication between government and community organizations and building strong partnerships are crucial to the improvement of programs and services for off-reserve Aboriginal people. Developing a fully functional Friendship Centre or Family Resource Centre in Fredericton will also be instrumental in offering culturally-relevant programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in a safe and comfortable setting.*

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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

# UAKN ATLANTIC RESEARCH PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

## “Our Histories, Our Stories”

UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee; Carolyn Taylor, contractor; Gary Gould, General Manager of Skigin Elnooq Housing; Steven Foulds, Lawyer UNB Law School Professor; Elders, Glen Tremblay and Dana Sappier

The UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee developed this project to provide an Urban Aboriginal historical overview for the Atlantic Provinces. The UAKN Atlantic Executive Committee has elected to start the research with the history of New Brunswick; once this is complete and the methodology is refined we will proceed with the remaining provinces Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The goal of this project will also be to develop an educational discussion guide, a final report and a brochure.

The research question for this project is, “What is the history of urban Aboriginal peoples in New Brunswick?” This study will examine the following themes:

- Pre history overview of territory, populations, governance structures and cultural practices
- Settler contact: historical timelines, locations and impacts and outcomes of this contact
- Settler/Aboriginal co-locations: impacts and outcomes
- Indian Act and subsequent legislation: impact and outcomes, historical overview
- Historical overview of urban Aboriginal organizations:  
mandate, population served, current role in the community

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## Re-visiting the Past, Re-imagining the Future: Documenting NBAPC Elders and Youth Leaders in Dialogue

Josephine Savarese, Associate Professor, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, St. Thomas University; Elizabeth Blaney, Director, NBAPC; Lisa Jodoin, urban Aboriginal filmmaker, UNB Ph.D. Candidate/student researcher, Gary Gould, Elder; and New Brunswick Filmmaker’s Co-operative

This project aims to address the need to document the history of the organization identified as a priority by Elders in the urban Aboriginal community, and to use its legacy as a path towards forward movement on the pressing political issues that urban Aboriginal population face in New Brunswick. The project will create a unique record that will preserve Elders’ rich insights on the NBAPC’s past accomplishments and struggles and also on their dreams for the NBAPC’s future. Their individualized accounts as advocates working in an urban context are an important resource to guide the future of the organization. In this project, we will provide Elders with an opportunity to share what the organization has meant to them and will document youth perspectives on advocacy by recording their responses to the Elders’ stories.

This project addresses all five of the Legacy Project questions approved by the UAKN Executive Committee: *Who are we?; How did we get here?; What do we do?; Where are we going?; How are we getting there?* This project seeks to further our understanding of urban Aboriginal people in New Brunswick. By recording the Elders' stories for the community, for the Youth Council and for future generations, this project will give the emerging leaders the foundational knowledge to answer the last two questions by themselves, on behalf of their community.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## Wi'kupaltimk (Feast of Forgiveness)

A film exploring the culture of food security and food sovereignty among the Urban Aboriginal population of Kjiipuktuk (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Pam Glode-DesRochers, Executive Director, Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; Dr. Trudy Sable, Director, Office of Aboriginal and Northern Research, Goresebrook Research Institute, Saint Mary's University; Kent Martin, former National Film Board producer/filmmaker; Salina Kemp, fourth year student, photographer, researcher, Saint Mary's University; Florence Blackett, All Nations Drumming Group, food security researcher, Millbrook First Nation; Elder, Dr. Bernie Francis; Membertou First Nation. Mi'kmaw linguist, musician, author; Roger Lewis, M.A., Curator of Ethnology, archaeologist, author, Nova Scotia Museum, Shubenacadie First Nation; and Lynn Langille, Health Disparities Coordinator for Public Health Canada

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

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

The film is a celebration of the long rootedness of the Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal people in general, to their landscape prior to colonization, and the sacredness of the food that sustained them spiritually, culturally, and physically. While addressing many of the current issues of poverty, isolation, and food insecurity many Urban Aboriginal people face, this film is ultimately about how people can and do respectfully connect with the urban landscape as a source of food and medicine. This process involves connecting and re- connecting with the knowledge of the Elders, the importance of community, and the cultural importance of "feast" that is at the heart of the community. The film is a way to show how Urban Aboriginal people are attempting to retain their traditional knowledge and establish their own food sovereignty. A question implicit to this process will be asked, "What is urban traditionalism, and how does food sovereignty play a role in what it means to people? A main goal of this project is to educate the general public about the growing urban Aboriginal population.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

## Re-storying NunatuKavut: Making connections through multi-generational digital storytelling

Dr. Sylvia Moore, Assistant Professor Labrador Institute, MUN; Amy Hudson is a PhD student at Memorial University from the Southern Inuit community of Black Tickle; Dr. Andrea Procter (MUN); Dr. Lisa Rankin (MUN) is an Associate Professor (Archaeology); Eva Luther, Elder; Darlene Wall, Social Sector Department for the NunatuKavut Community Council; Denise Cole leader from Charlottetown who currently lives in HVGB; Patricia Nash, NunatuKavut Community Council

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

This project serves as a second phase of a previous research project between Memorial University and NunatuKavut that will collect and disseminate multigenerational Southern Inuit women's stories with a larger emphasis on youth engagement.

### **This research project will have three main objectives:**

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

### **CURRENT STATUS**

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

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## Let's Get It Right: Creating A Culturally Appropriate Training Module and Identifying Local Urban Aboriginal Resources for Non-Aboriginal Caregivers of Aboriginal Children In New Brunswick

Marilyn Dupre, PhD, Dean, School of Social Work, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, New Brunswick; Anne Caverhill, Program Manager, Child Protection, Department of Social Development, Government of New Brunswick; Community Partners: Patsy McKinney, Director Under One Sky and Elizabeth Blaney, New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

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

### PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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

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

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Gendering the Duty to Consult: Making Aboriginal Consultation Rights Meaningful to Aboriginal Women

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

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

Urban Aboriginal women have long complained that governmental engagement has been predominated by representing the interests of on-reserve populations and male-dominated organizations. However, these complaints have gone largely unheard by the courts. A key reason for this lack of responsiveness by the courts has been evidentiary. Our research seeks to lay the foundation towards making the case for an intersectional analysis and to draw out the representational capacity and expertise of urban Aboriginal women as well as the gendered representational gap caused by reliance on *Indian Act* governance structures.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The duty to consult should be developed to account for the gender discriminatory history of the Indian Act. The consultative capacity of Aboriginal organizations representing and/or serving off reserve and non-status descendants in the maternal line is entirely adequate to the task.

To date this project has performed a literature review, written a legal research paper, and presented the legal framework at CINSA 2015. Final paper in progress.

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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# Coming Out Stories: Two Spirit Narratives in Atlantic Canada

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

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

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

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. For more information visit: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)  
[youtube.com/watch?v=bgG1o-JcKdw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgG1o-JcKdw)

# “This is what I wish you knew”: Identity and Well-being among Urban Aboriginal Peoples in Halifax

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

This research project explores urban Aboriginal peoples’ experiences in Halifax. It will seek to understand the perceptions, understandings, and experiences of the urban environment including narratives reflecting values, beliefs, attitudes, cultural practices, feelings of belonging and perceptions of inequality and resilience. This research project will use film as a method of data collection and as a dissemination strategy in a larger community-based participatory research project exploring urban Aboriginal identity and mental health in Halifax. The following research questions, which build off of UAKN Atlantic’s key questions, will guide this research:

## WHO ARE WE AND HOW DID WE GET HERE?

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

## WHAT DO WE DO?

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

## WHERE ARE WE GOING AND HOW ARE WE GETTING THERE?

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

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



Urban Paul, 37, left, works with art teacher Dorrie Brown to transfer his artwork onto a clay tile/Photo by Stephen Brake



*“For me, the only thing that I really have for a sense of belonging and a sense of structure and a sense of home is like, the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre,”*

Michelle Paul explains

Retrieved from: [hkukukwes.com/2016/03/01/clay-mural-project-aims-to-reflect-urban-aboriginal-community-in-halifax](http://hkukukwes.com/2016/03/01/clay-mural-project-aims-to-reflect-urban-aboriginal-community-in-halifax)





The clay tile mural, *This Is What I Wished You Knew*, was unveiled at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax June 21, 2016 / Photo by Stephen Brake.

Retrieved from: [kukukwes.com/2016/06/22/mural-that-explores-indigenous-self-identity-unveils-in-halifax](http://kukukwes.com/2016/06/22/mural-that-explores-indigenous-self-identity-unveils-in-halifax)  
Website created for this project: [thisiswhatiwishyouknew.com](http://thisiswhatiwishyouknew.com)

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. A website for this project has been launched.  
For more information visit: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)

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# Aboriginal Nursing Students' Capacity to Succeed in a Baccalaureate Nursing Program: An Exploration of the Experiences of Aboriginal Nursing Students Who Have Primarily Resided in an Urban Environment Compared to Those Who Have Lived Primarily in an Aboriginal Community

Kathy Wilson, RN, PhD, Assistant Dean of Graduate and Advanced RN Studies - UNBF, FON, MacLaggan Hall, Fredericton, NB; Urban Aboriginal Community Member: Shelley Francis, RN, BN, CDE, UNBI's Diabetes Educator, and UNBF FON's Coordinator for the Aboriginal Nursing Initiative; and Tobique First Nation

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

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY INCLUDE TO

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## “Isolated Events?”: Connecting Patterns of Struggle and Vulnerability in Young Urban Aboriginal Women’s Narratives in Kjiptuk (Halifax)

Dr. Trudy Sable, St. Mary’s University; Dr. Darryl Leroux, St. Mary’s University; Chenise Haché, Initiative for Advocacy and Research into Violence Against Indigenous Women; and Elder, Debbie Eisan from the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre

This research project aims to connect the stories of missing and murdered Aboriginal women to one another, which research shows are not just isolated events. In doing so, we hope to document their stories, and create a comprehensive understanding of the systemic challenges they face. This research will also focus on 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.

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

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

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

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Creation Stories: Urban Aboriginal Early Education and Literacy Intervention

Neil Forbes, Director of Education, Lennox Island First Nation; Greg McKenna, Ph. D Research Consultant, Applied Research Department, Holland College; and University of Prince Edward Island

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

This project aims at combining traditional ways of knowing and teaching with relevant and effective research, our team hopes to create a model to empower and enrich the lives of urban aboriginals during the early period of parenthood. Not only will this support cultural identity during a critical period of transition, but it will be another step in creating a community that supports culture and knowledge.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

There is a gap in urban Aboriginal focused programming.

A recommendation that arose was a pilot project to further explore the created curriculum out of this project.

### CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Urban Aboriginal families with children in care: Understanding the experiences and needs of parents living in Fredericton and Halifax

Étienne Paulin, PhD Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Université de Moncton; Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre; and Under One Sky - Monoqonuwicik Neoteetjg Mosigisig

This research project aims to promote the wellbeing of Aboriginal families living in Atlantic Canadian urban contexts by considering the point of view of parents with children placed in out-of-home care. It seeks to give importance to the voices and concerns of the primary caretakers themselves and to better understand their

day-to-day lived experiences, challenges and needs, both as parents and in their dealings with the mainstream child welfare system. The vision of this project is to use film as a way to tell and share stories on themes exploring urban Aboriginal identity and mental health in Halifax with the public.

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

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

## CURRENT STATUS

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

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## Here Not There: An Urban Aboriginal Podcast

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

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

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

## CURRENT STATUS

This research is in progress. Episode 1 of 12 has been published.

For more information visit: [uakn.org/research-map](http://uakn.org/research-map)  
[youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_tAjIKtT6A](https://youtube.com/watch?v=4_tAjIKtT6A)

# Data Visualization Tool



This tool explores important data on Canada's young and growing urban Aboriginal population. This tool is based on data generated from Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey and 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. You can access information on population, income, housing, education, labour and language. [uakn.org/demographics](http://uakn.org/demographics)

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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!

The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, the UAKN, is a community driven research network focused on the Urban Aboriginal population in Canada. The UAKN establishes a national, interdisciplinary network involving universities, community, and government partners for research, scholarship and knowledge mobilization. This research was funded by a SSHRC Partnership grant entitled Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network: Research for a Better Life, for more information visit: [uakn.org](http://uakn.org)

The UAKN would like to acknowledge the work and partnership of all the communities involved in the community driven research taking place across all of the regions.



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