Final Report

Inclusion in Mainstream Spaces, Services and Programs in Vancouver's Inner City: Comparing the Experiences and Perceptions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Seniors

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UAKN Western Research Centre

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The Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, the UAKN, is a community driven research network focused on the Urban Aboriginal population in Canada. The UAKN establishes a national, interdisciplinary network involving universities, community, and government partners for research, scholarship and knowledge mobilization. For more information visit: www.uakn.org

ELDERS INCLUSION RESEARCH

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ALIVE, VCC, AND UAKN

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

uakn
Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network

A special thanks to all those involved in this research. You, the participants, service providers, and community are the true drivers of change from within communities.

"The number one thing is not to give up hope… we must be aware of what's going on in the community and not to give up."

We acknowledge that this research belongs to community and respectfully recognize that it occurred on the unceded and traditional territories of the sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), se̓l̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Coast Salish Nations.

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This research grew out of a community identified need. It is by community, for community, and it is meant to become a tool of empowerment for the people while providing key insights into the inner-workings of the communities.
We aim to,
 - share all information with everyone interested
 -deepen an understanding of Elder inclusion in our communities
 -identify common barriers and desires
 -put forward community recommendations

WHY IS THIS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

Indigenous seniors are a particularly vulnerable and often invisible group in Canada. Their numbers have more than doubled between the years 2001- 2011 and Statistics Canada has found Indigenous seniors represent a higher rate of the low-income population over their non-Indigenous counterparts. Their overall marginal socioeconomic position and shared histories of past trauma, both of which are legacies of the colonial system, are further compounded by their ongoing experiences with structural violence in their communities. In the urban context, they face unique challenges including social isolation, exploitation, health, and economic issues (Beatty & Berdahl, 2011). Looking at Vancouver's inner city, it is recognized that it is a geographic space with significant meaning to Indigenous people as it is located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish People. Unfortunately, many believe this important history and sense of connection has been largely undermined by local planning and development processes that have tended to displace low-income residents, including Indigenous community members who have long called the neighbourhood home (Schatz, 2010).

"Through gentrification, Native spaces in the city are now being treated as urbs nullius – urban space void of Indigenous sovereign presence" - Glen Coulthard, Dene Scholar

The City of Vancouver recently completed a Downtown Eastside (DTES) local area plan which acknowledges the need for more affordable and culturally relevant community programming for Chinese and Aboriginal seniors and better placemaking opportunities' for Aboriginal peoples. This research seeks to generate knowledge that can inform place-based inclusion strategies, aiming to engage and support the diversity amongst local seniors.

This report is geographically based (place-based) in the inner city areas of Vancouver, primarily Strathcona, Grandview-Woodlands, and the DTES neighbourhoods. Based on the only available statistical data, Census 2006, the people of the DTES have the lowest median income ($13,691 per annum) in the city – for the rest of the city the median income is $47,299 per annum. This is a reflection of the large proportion of DTES residents on Income Assistance, pensions and other forms of assistance. Poverty presents a significant challenge to the community's health, social well-being and resilience as a whole.

Current demographics indicate up to one third of families in the inner city report Aboriginal ancestry, and moving closer to the heart of the Downtown Eastside some service providers estimate 30-40 percent of those living in the neighbourhood identify as Aboriginal at any given time (Kumagai & McGuire, 2012). This is in stark contrast to the city-wide figures of 2 percent. According to 2006 Census data, 52 per cent of DTES residents, some 9,600 people are aged 45 or older compared to 39 per cent and 224,915 in the whole city. Seniors also make up a significant group with 4000 (22 per cent) aged 65 plus or more compared to 75,990 (13 per cent) in Vancouver as a whole. These demographics are not reflected in mainstream community spaces and institutions. Aboriginal elders remain largely absent from these places and are not part of important community conversations. Marginalization can take many forms including social, economic, and cultural; and Aboriginal people face multiple barriers including perceived and actual discrimination, costs attached to mainstream culture and recreation programs, and a lack of familiarity navigating mainstream systems. Previous studies have documented the underutilization of services by Aboriginal seniors in Canada, a phenomenon that exists in both urban and rural settings (Beatty & Berdahl, 2011).

The intergenerational effects of residential schools continue to affect Aboriginal families and communities, contribute to the loss of cultural knowledge, and manifest adverse health issues at both individual and community level. Living In the urban context, where they are displaced from traditional communities contributes to a heightened sense of marginality among Aboriginal residents. The invisibility of Aboriginal seniors has meant that community organizations have not been able to learn about their specific needs and priorities, nor find ways to meaningfully engage them in the daily life of their community, including decision-making processes.

Having identified some of the key pervasive issues that face seniors living in the Eastside, with specific consideration of Indigenous seniors, the importance of this research is highlighted. Knowing this, our aim was to learn from, and with, the community in order to figure out how to create more supportive urban environments and generate insights into the inner-workings of the community. Through doing this we hope to provide a platform for Indigenous voices to be better heard and diminish the amount of urbs nullis spaces.

L I T E R A T U R E   R E V I E W

When looking into the existing research related to the issues of culture-specific senior engagement in low-income urban environments, a clear gap in knowledge is demonstrated. Research relating to Indigenous experiences, urban settings, senior engagement, program utilization rates, or a combination of such, often deals with a small scope, in that the research tends to focus on a singular demographic. What this is demonstrating is a lack of crossover between issues that often come from similarly rooted systemic issues. In conducting a thorough literature review of related research, the themes that come to the forefront are examinations of Indigenous youth, children, and women in the urban setting, Canadian Seniors research, Indigenous Elders research, and Indigenous cultural inclusion research. In the short review of these four areas of literature below, the patterns that emerged show clear, siloed, approaches into research relating to Indigenous seniors and their help-seeking behaviours. What this then tells us is that there is a notable gap in research relating to Indigenous seniors, and their interactions or experiences with services.

URBAN INDIGENOUS RELATED LITERATURE

Given that Indigenous Peoples make up a significant percentage of the urban population, largely due to deep-seated colonial histories, there has been a recent emergence of research relating to Indigenous Peoples in the urban setting. The research and literature surrounding this often looks at specific demographics rather than connecting the issues across intergenerational boundaries, and within the Canadian context there is a significant gap in knowledge relating to Indigenous Peoples and their urban experience. Noting that, there is urban indigenous literature, but there tends to be larger representation of youth populations, or how cities need to consider how and where Indigenous Peoples occupy space. The latter, striving to identify places and process in which decolonization can manifest, or what that could look like. While this information in itself in invaluable we need to recognize that the urban experience effects more than just youth.

CANADIAN SENIORS RESEARCH-RELATED LITERATURE

Seniors research within a Canadian context exposes a few key trends and concerns. There continues to be an increasing amount of research relating to seniors occurring on a global level, and Canada has participated by witnessing a growing number of provinces and territories developing seniors advocate or ombudsperson offices. These offices offer a space to hear and address more localized issues; and they regularly release reports detailing concerns, issues, and recommendations relating to the lives of seniors.

In this field of research five main areas of concern have been identified, these areas are housing, health care, transportation, income supports, and elder abuse. Because these identified aspects encompass a broad set of concerns, the literature related to these issues them often only tackles one aspect. Unfortunately because of the silo approach and lack of crossover approach, the fact that these issues are interconnected is lost.

INDIGENOUS ELDER-RELATED LITERATURE

When looking into the research that currently exists relating to Indigenous Elders a few trends emerge, which highlight the lack of research relating to the many aspects of the lives of Elders in Canada. To start, research relating to Indigenous Elders has a tendency to manifest in health and healthcare related research, leaving out a host of others issues that Elders may face. However, in this vein of research there has been an increasing number of studies dedicated to the importance of Elder inclusion in Indigenous frameworks due to the traditional values placed on intergenerational connections. As has also been mentioned before, there is the ever-present trend of research relating to seniors touching on just one of the five identified key areas of concern, and the research relating to Indigenous seniors is no different. Here we can see research emerging that looks specifically at issues such as Elder abuse or health care, but with little-to-no crossover between the areas of concern. This area of literature also demonstrates the lack of research specifically in the Canadian context.

CULTURAL INCLUSION RELATED LITERATURE

As a topic, cultural inclusion is a broad, wide encompassing, theme that can look at many issues of minority and diversity. In regards to what we are looking at, we have narrowed the scope to look at literature speaking to the cultural inclusion of indigenous peoples. This form of cultural inclusion branches out in many directions such as, what the inclusion of indigenous peoples in research looks like, the importance of elders inclusion, collaborations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and many other facets. Another theme that appears in the literature are the recommendations suggested for ways in which to decolonize colonial processes, and how indigenous knowledges can be incorporated into processes such as education, policy, and labour. This area of literature is rich and well-explored, yet the issue of lack of crossover or lack or boundary pushing is still present.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

INTERVIEWS
Using our network of community partners we have targeted 25 Indigenous and 23 non-Indigenous seniors living in the inner city to participate in guided interviews about their perception of their community. Seniors were asked about the challenges, opportunities, positive and negative experiences in their neighbourhood and their perceptions and behaviours relating to how they access local spaces, resources, and services. All surveys were modeled after the Environics Urban Indigenous Peoples Study which provided limited data on Indigenous seniors in the Inner City of Vancouver. Interviews were designed so that comparative data could be gathered on the experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous seniors in order to capture the diverse needs, priorities, and unique strengths that exist in the community.

Interviews were conducted in elders homes, or if they preferred, a public location of their choosing. When the interviews were conducted in residences, student interviewers travelled in pairs (either with another student or with a staff member). Interviews were recorded, and later transcribed for analysis. The audio recordings have been stored on a password-protected computer. All paper-based information regarding participants (i.e. signed consent forms) will be stored in the PI's academic office for the duration of the study, and in 2021, shredded and discarded.

SHARING CIRCLES
Sharing circles have been held with Indigenous seniors with about 6-8 participants for each. As the circumstances and challenges differ for individuals across the three neighbourhoods of this study, circles have been held at Britannia Community Centre and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, as to hear voices from across the communities. Seniors were asked to reflect on what they feel impacts their safety and well-being, what is happening or already existing in their communities to address issues of health, safety and well-being, and what additional services they would utilize.

ASSET-MAPPING AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEWS
After identifying local organizations and service agencies, online and in-person informational reviews occurred in order to develop a comprehensive data-set of service available in the community. Following the informational reviews, surveys were sent out to the identified organizations in order to pinpoint available resources for seniors, gather agency data regarding the demographics of program participants, as well as any program utilization rates that organizations were willing to share. The online survey garned 21 responses from community organizations ranging all the way from community centres to local health care providers.

HEARING FROM COMMUNITY

Compromised of separate sharing circles and intercultural gatherings we held a hybrid event at the DTES Women's centre which was led by Indigenous Elder Kat Norris. After Kat spoke to identity, shared history, and personal knowledge, everyone broke out into smaller groups to discuss personal safety and health in the community. The event followed a big dinner and was closed out with short intercultural surveys that were filled out which offered a place for participants to elaborate or address their concerns that they felt were missed out in the discussions.

In December of 2018, we hosted a lunch n' learn event in partnership with the Community Response Network and the Grandview Woodland Food Network. At this event, we presented the initial findings of our research project. We invited all the Indigenous and non-Indigenous seniors who participated in the project to attend, along with all of the senior-serving organizations that we reached out to throughout the project. The goal of this event was to provide as a "check in" to make sure the research was reflecting community feelings and experiences.

In late February 2019 ALIVE hosted one last community check-in where we presented on all the findings to guide a discussion. This presentation was part of a broader Elders Participating In Community event that brought diverse seniors together over food to learn about a few community projects and research. Out of this our final community recommendations were formed and gave us space to engage in one last time.

FINDINGS

Due to the nature of this research the information we have collected spans across a variety of community voices and perspectives. In order to give power to each voice equally, our findings breakdown the research into the following sections, service-provider identified and participant identified. Asset mapping organizational surveys are data collected from the perspective of service providers, while interviews and sharing circles give voice to community participants.
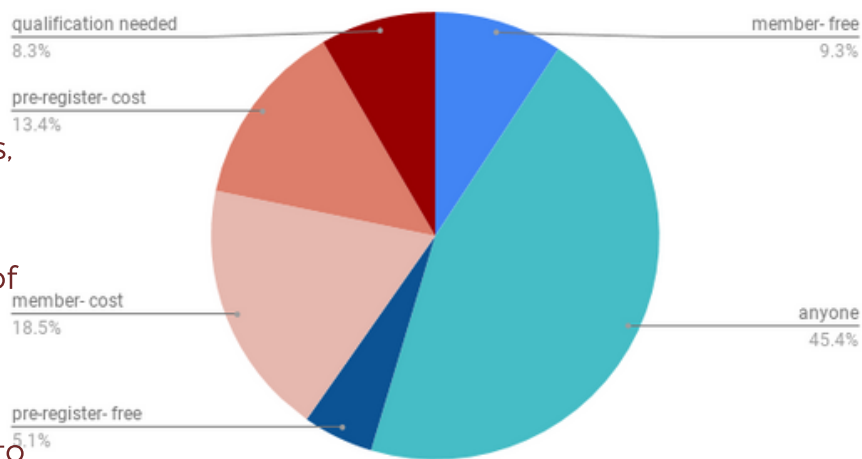
FINDINGS ● Service-Provider Data

ASSET MAPPING DATABASE: BY THE NUMBERS

Through asset mapping and organizational reviews, 36 organizations were identified within the catchment area as key service providers for seniors in the community. Of the 36 identified, 21 organizations shared insights through participating in a survey aimed to further understand utilization rates, help-seeking behaviours of seniors, and if there is a significant difference between aboriginal and non-aboriginal seniors accessing services. Asset mapping took the form of in-depth online and in-person reviews of the types of programing and activities available. In doing so the database collected reflects information presenting barriers to accessibility, specifically in terms of membership status and cost, time of programming, and location.

Membership Accessibility

To Illustrate the data relating to membership status the graph to the right highlights ease to accessibility. As a general, blue-tones are more representative of easier accessible services, while reds are more representative of real and perceived barriers. Detailing the descriptors offers a better understanding of how the colours correspond with real and perceived barriers to access. Pre-register cost and member-cost both represent more colonial processes that add barriers to accessibility.


Membership Accessibility

- qualification needed 8.3%
- pre-register- cost 13.4%
- member- cost 18.5%
- pre-register- free 5.1%
- member- free 9.3%
- anyone 45.4%

Seasonal Programming

Other areas of data we measured included season or time of year. This data is meant to provide insights into whether there is a particular time of year where seniors programming spikes or drops-off. For this, data was collected through reviews of online information, and brochures collected from sites. Most commonly, the places that had a difference in programming had relatively equal programming in the fall/winter vs. the spring/ summer. Figure 2 shows the very close-to-equal distribution of programming throughout the seasons and all year programming.

Seasonal Programming

Winter
14.0%

Spring/ Summer
12.7%

1X month
2.1%

All year
71.2%
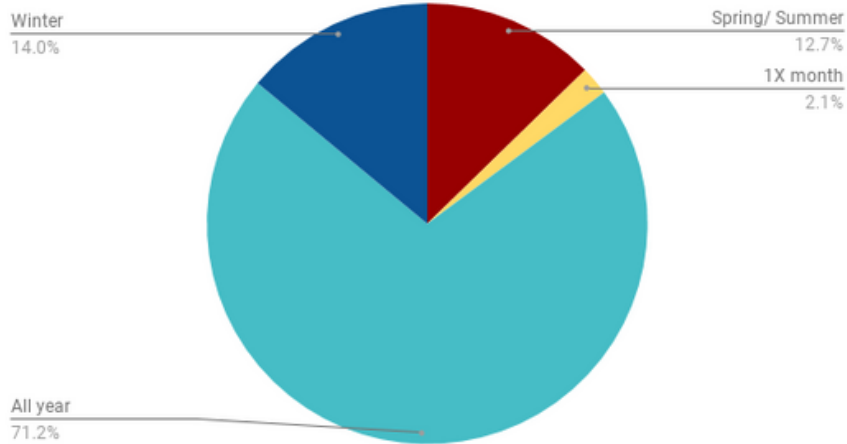
Time of Programming

Another factor of measurement was times that programming is available. After grouping times into one of five categories we found that the largest percentage of programming was available in the mornings, with the smallest percentage of programming being available in the evenings.
Legend
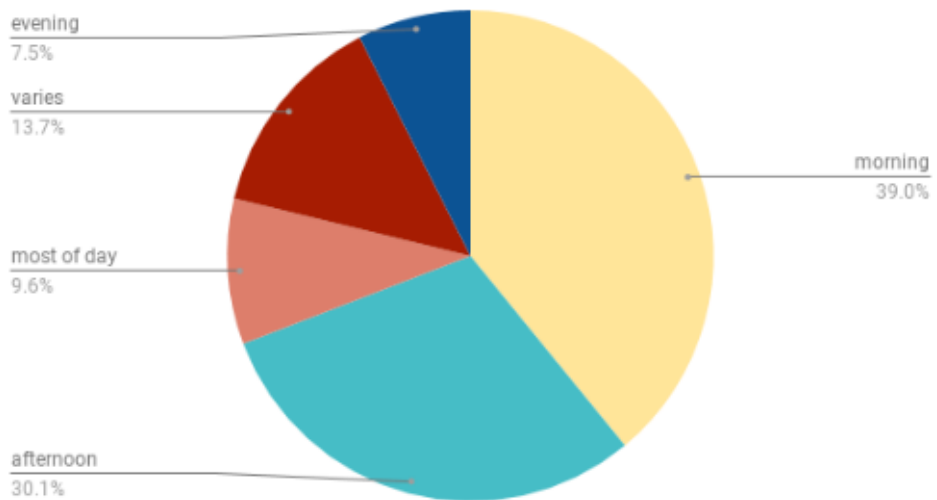Morning: Between 8am-12pm
Afternoon: Between 12pm- 4:30pm
Evening: Between 4:30pm-9pm
Most of Day: programming spans across timing categories
Varies: program times change depending on unknown factors

Time of Programming

evening
7.5%

varies
13.7%

most of day
9.6%

morning
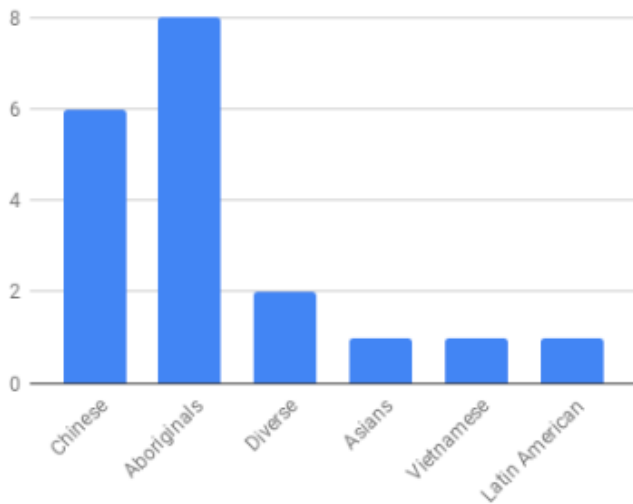39.0%

afternoon
30.1%

Asset Mapping Surveys: Hearing From Organizations

Service providers were asked a series of questions relating to popular programming, utilization rates, approximately how many programs they provide, and so forth. Out of 21 service providers interviewed, 23.8% (5 organizations) said they did not have seniors programs. 76.2% (16 organizations) stated that they did. The breakdown of how many programs they provide can be seen in the graph to the right.

9.5%

19%

14.3%

28.6%

23.8%

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+
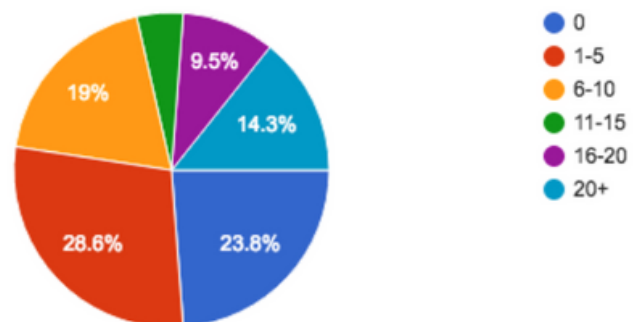
Service providers were then asked if they see higher rates of cultural backgrounds or identities engaging and 15 responded (71.4%) saying "yes." Of the service providers that answered "yes" the breakdown of their answers is represented by the graph to the left. This information shows that service-providers are seeing higher rates of culturally-specific or narrowed programming rather that intercultural connections or spaces.

Another part of surveys addressed what service providers saw as their most popular programs and, on the other side, what they heard as most desired or missing. By asking these questions we get an inside look at what service-providers hear which we can later contrast with what community participants directly tell us. Starting with what service providers see and know as their most popular programming the below illustration is meant to help spatially visualize which programs are seeing some of the higher engagement rates. This visualization shows us that food, social, and cultural programs are understood to be the most popular programs with arts and exercise being close seconds. Addressing the "unique and specialized services" group we created this section to be representative of programs and workshops, that can be considered more one-off programs, in that they may only be offered with limitations but still see high engagement rates due to the high demand of the program.
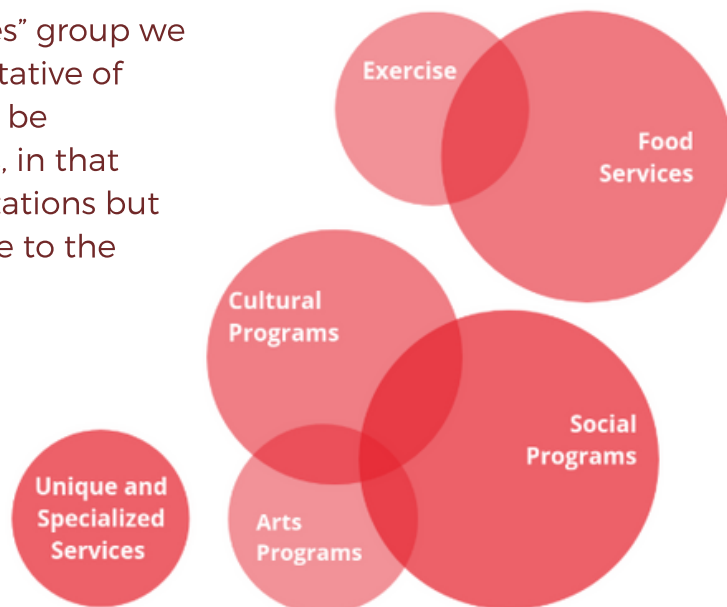
On the other end, we then asked questions about what it was that service providers heard from community regarding what the community desired or wanted more of. To help illustrate this data we created the same kind of graph in order to highlight differences between "popular programming" and "desired programming." This graph shows us that service providers hear differences in what is being delivered and what is being desired, with the most notable changes being the desires for cultural knowledge sharing, health and wellness services, and out trips. In this graph exercise and health and wellness services separate because wellness was described as a wrap-around mind, body, and spiritual health whereas exercise was solely for the physical body.

FINDINGS ● Participant Identified Data

Breaking-down data and findings from interviews poses challenges in that we cannot account for the entirety of every story. In order to field these concerns, we have broken down our findings from the interviews into the themes that have most commonly manifested. We have given specific space for quotes from interviews in order to best present the voices and the people that this research is truly trying to give power to. In the findings section of this report, our research will present an "across-the-board" breakdown of themes, meaning that it does not present a breakdown of similarities and differences of between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Rather, those notes will come through in our later analysis.

COMMON THEMES
- There is a common concern expressed by elders around feelings of safety and security within their neighborhoods. More specifically, given the socio-economic challenges present in the Vancouver Eastside, many elders report feeling unsafe walking around their neighborhoods at night, and identified lack of safety as a barrier to mobility within their communities.

- It was expressed by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous seniors that there is a noticeable lack of family doctors in the neighbourhoods in which they live. It may be that there are family doctors and walk in clinics available, but that the elders do not know about them.
- Many elders identified serious financial and logistical challenges posed by their pension plans. For one, there is a lack of education and information available for elders about how to navigate their pension plans and the medical benefits /insurance coverage that comes with it. Many elders also felt that they did not have enough money on their pension plans to cover their basic needs. They felt that they were forced to live on a very low income, which impacted their emotional, physical, and mental well-being, and limited their ability to engage in fee-based programming.

> *"Everything is getting more expensive but our income is the same"*

- One of the largest barriers to mobility that was identified by elders throughout the research project were the physical and financial challenges posed by travelling on transit. Transit passes can be costly to seniors on a low income. Additionally, it can be difficult to identify transit schedules, stops, and maps for seniors who do not have access to the internet. Feeling unsafe at night also made it unappealing to use transit for seniors who would have to wait alone at a bus stop for an unknown amount of time.
- Many seniors expressed that there is a general lack of knowledge and resources for elders highlighting the service provisions available in the area for them. While we found through our asset mapping surveys that there are a wide variety of seniors services and programs available, the fact that this was heard over and over again throughout the elders interviews highlights a significant gap in communication in this area.

> *"I hope that the cycle breaks... and it's just an endless cycle and without education...and proper help, that cycle is never going to change..."*

- It was expressed to us by many elders in many different settings that while there is an overall lack of elder-specific health resources, there is an even more prominent gap in mental-health specific supports for elders.

- One of the differences we did note in our interviews between Indigenous and non-Indigenous elders is that some Indigenous Elders expressed feelings of exclusion in areas where programming is only catering to one culture. This is particularly prominent in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, which is home to Chinatown, and has many service providers and organizations devoted exclusively to the Chinese population.

> *"In the urban setting we need to feel a sense of belonging"*

- One thing that we noted was heavily missing for elders is male-specific programming, as well as programming that was more educational/empowering (i.e. more than just an arts and crafts program - one that involves educating elders about topics of interest to them, and that enables them to gain skills they identify as wanting).
- A significant concern from community, specifically Indigenous, was a concern for the future generations and their connections to culture. Elders spoke to the importance of maintaining ties to tradition in order to ground oneself and their identity. In speaking to this they emphasized the importance of intergenerational connections.

> *I lost my culture, I lost my language, I lost my connection to my community and I really don't want them to go through that."*

HYBRID EVENT

Our "hybrid event" was designed to be an early check in with our community, as well as a space for us to hear community concerns. Our goal was to bring together a group of diverse seniors from within the downtown Eastside community to gather feedback on what our project was finding so far and to learn what information we may be missing. What we found broadly fits into 3 categories: advocacy; community concerns; and safety and wellbeing. The trouble with "categorizing" the broader themes voiced at the event is that more often than not each theme can fall into more than one category. Thus, the "umbrella" terms we use are meant to be illustrative of the broader connections between themes. Falling largely under the advocacy umbrella, the key themes voiced were an overwhelming desire for increased participation in community and consultation in regards to planning and programming, and a strong desire for more intra-organization knowledge sharing.

Under the safety and wellbeing umbrella, common themes that were shared spoke to racialized feelings of exclusion with a growing desire amongst seniors to connect with both service providers and the communities they live in. They also brought up concerns around the challenges that transit poses for seniors within the Eastside communities, specifically around the difficulties navigating transit routes, affording transit passes, and the physical demands that riding on transit requires. Many participants expressed transit continually increases barriers to access and therefore unintentionally segregates communities. These themes also fit well under the community concerns umbrella.. Under this theme, seniors highlighted the lack of mental health supports that exist for them, and how the gap in service delivery around mental health boils over into all aspects of life for those living in Eastside communities.

KEY INSIGHTS DEVELOPED FROM RESEARCH

- Cultural teachings and beliefs have shown that increased intergenerational connections can help increase social mobility through self development. Creating spaces where more intergenerational learning can occur can help foundationalize/ground young people's identify and help create avenues for social mobility.
- There is a strong and robust community of elders who express the desire and the ability to be more engaged with their communities. They have clearly expressed that they want more connection with each other and their communities, more intergenerational and intercultural programs. They also want more culturally significant and culturally informed programming.
- On the other hand, there is also a large community of elders who are severely limited in their physical mobility, and these are arguably the most vulnerable subsection of an already vulnerable population. More time, energy, and resources are needed to engage this community and empower a robust conversation around the barriers they face and potential solutions to support them.
- There needs to be more pressure on service providers and programmers to empower elders to create and implement their own solutions to the barriers identified in this report. They need to provide opportunities for elders to get involved in advocacy, education, etc. Many elders throughout the project repeatedly expressed the desire for programming opportunities outside of arts and crafts or afternoon tea.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the research project, we held various "check ins" with different community groups to present our current findings to them and receive feedback on our interpretations of the data. Through these events, which were always initiated with a presentation on our research to date, we would have questions and discussion periods with the community members present. These spaces came to be vital spaces for us to hear community feedback,and they produced a number of direct recommendations of community members. We have highlighted them here:

- Grow connections to isolated elders and reach 'shut-ins' by providing more opportunities for elders programming in seniors housing units. Utilize active community seniors with the physical capacity to go into homes and living complexes to run afternoon programs with activities such as crafts and to provide social opportunities over snacks and tea.Through doing this, active community members would be able to fulfill a desire to connect and advocate for change while providing a much need social connection to those less likely to engage in community beyond the familiarity of their home area. This addresses more than one of the identified common barriers in that it provides an avenue to help more isolated seniors.
- Train and hire more class 4+ certified drivers in Vancouver Parks Board. In speaking to the community, we recognized that there is an overtly identified problem stemming from the lack of drivers and vans able to shuttle seniors to and from programming and community services. The certification process to gain VPB 4+ drivers status is lengthy and financially costly, which results in staff being held back in community centers and therefore unable e to assist in transporting seniors to and from valuable programming opportunities
- Establish a better system for community transport. Many community centers and housing sites have the resources for transporting groups in busses and vans yet they are often left unused. Finding a way to better utilize these resources and infrastructure can help in reaching those in isolation and meeting some of the large community desires such as out trips and transportation issues.
- Across communities, many services and programs are provided for seniors every day, but because these resources are so vast in number and often so widely spread out, the knowledge of what is "out there" can be difficult for seniors to figure out. This issue of resource-identification becomes a barrier for those that need specialized services the most, and can pose inherent difficulties for organizations to know what else is being offered in the community. Realizing this challenge, the community members we consulted came up with the recommendation to host either a city-wide or a neighbourhood level, conference where service providers can come together with seniors in their communities in order to learn about each other and identify common solutions to communication challenges.

TIMELINE OF RESEARCH

	Phase One May 2018-June 2018	Phase Two June 2018-Sept 2018	Phase Three Oct 2018-Feb 2019
Research Activities	➤ Hire Research Coordinator and Summer Research Assistants ➤ Revise research activities and timeline + create new work plan.	➤ Front-line research phase - interviews, asset mapping, and sharing circles/community dialogues.	➤ Data analysis + report writing ➤ Final community consultation with data analysis complete.
Deliverables	➤ Research Timeline and Work Plan ➤ Clear staff roles defined and all staff hired. ➤ Computers + other technology purchased.	➤ 50 elders interviews completed ➤ 3 community consultations/sharing circles completed ➤ Community Asset Mapping Responses Collected	➤ Final report of research activities to UAKN (February 28th) ➤ Final community consultation (February 22nd)

PHASE FOUR;

Now that the initial exploratory research project is complete, VCC and ALIVE would like to expand on our current data and findings to create a manuscript to publish in academic journals. This manuscript would expand upon the community recommendations and the elder-identified themes presented in the final report, and would aim to propose more in-depth policy recommendations for municipal and provincial governments around elder care and service provision. This manuscript would also outline a potential path forward for more research on this topic within our community, highlighting the areas where greater in-depth solutions are needed to tackle complex and systemic barriers.

This manuscript would be given to UAKN at the end of phase four to provide input, guidance, and edits. The UAKN will have final say on any journals or organizations that will receive this manuscript following the UAKN edits.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

With the $30,000 funding from the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, ALIVE and VCC set out to identify some of the unique barriers and challenges facing Indigenous elders in Vancouver's East Side. Over the past ten months, we have conducted 25 interviews with local Indigenous elders and 25 interviews with local non-Indigenous elders, two community sharing circles, two community consultations, and asset mapping surveys with over 20 senior-serving organizations in the area.

Our findings from these interviews are presented in the above report, and demonstrate a strong need for further research in this area. Through this research it is clear to us that there is a strong community of elders, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that have the desire to see change in the way services are provided in their neighbourhoods. Many common barriers and challenges facing elders were identified, along with many potential solutions (both from a policy perspective and an on-the-ground service provider perspective). With more funding and a more robust research scope, there would be an opportunity to engage with more community elders and service providers over a longer period of time. Thus creating more space for elder engagement and therefore provide more in-depth findings which would only further community knowledge and problem solving.