Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

Skookum Youth

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN SURREY

JUNE 26, 2023

Strong. Powerful. Brave.

Message from Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee Co-Chairs

"Our youth are "Skookum" – strong, powerful and brave. They also face many challenges due to the legacy of colonialism, such as intergenerational trauma, anti-Indigenous racism, and disconnection from their Indigenous culture and identity. We need to support our Indigenous youth so they can reach their full potential. Having a dedicated Indigenous gathering space in Surrey with the capacity for multiple services, supports, and programs, including educational programming and supports, is a necessity for our Indigenous youth to thrive."

Dr. Lyn Daniels, Director of Instruction, Aboriginal Learning, Surrey Schools SUILC Co-Chair

"Our youth are our future. Nourishing their needs and supporting them through difficult times is imperative.   The City of Surrey is home to a large and diverse population of Indigenous youth. Our youth are feeling the weight of systemic racism and anti-LGBTQIA+ attitudes. Our 2 Spirit and LGBTQIA are advocating for access to more queer health care, education around gender diversity, sexual health, and mental health supports. More programming that serves our youth with dignity and without judgement is needed in Surrey."

Sam Jack, SUILC Co-Chair

Statement of Recognition

A core principle for Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee's work is the recognition of the traditional territories of the Coast Salish where our work occurs, specifically the territories of the Səmiahma (Semiahmoo) First Nation, q̓ʷɑ:n̓ƛ̓ən̓ (Kwantlen) First Nation, the q̓ićəəy̓ (Katzie) First Nation, the kwikwəəƛ̓əəm (Kwikwetlem) First Nation, the qiqéyt (Qayqayt) First Nation and the sćəwaθenaʔɬtəməxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nation. SUILC recognizes their connection to this land and acknowledges that we are newcomers to Surrey like everyone else. SUILC does not represent these land-based First Nations and we are careful not to speak on their behalf.

Gratitude

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CITY OF SURREY
the future lives here.

Recommendations

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee has the following three recommendations to support Indigenous youth living in Surrey.

RECOMMENDATION **1**

Develop programming for Indigenous youth that builds on best practices from elsewhere

Following the five themes of successful Indigenous youth programs that were identified by our research, we recommend programs for Indigenous youth in Surrey:

- be youth led,
- provide wholistic support,
- use culture as (re)connection,
- involve intergenerational mentorship, and
- be built on relationships.

Furthermore, we recommend heeding the advice gathered from the experiences of other Indigenous youth programs. These experiences advise that:

- Youth led programs need to have sufficient support and resources to set the youth up for success.
- Lasting and stable programs will have better uptake and impact than short term one-offs.
- Staff turnover has detrimental effects. Find ways to support those staff who are supporting the youth.
- Deficit framing such as "youth-at-risk" should be avoided. Instead use language that will uplift youth, while still recognizing the systemic barriers they face.

Honour Indigenous youth voices from Surrey

Focus on the Immediate Priority Recommendations gathered from Indigenous youth in Surrey. They are as follows:

- Provide a physical place equipped to meet multiple needs, such as: showers, laundry, kitchen, food, computers, printers, phones, etc.
- Programs should offer cultural activities, such as: medicine workshops, regalia making, dancing, drumming circles, carving, art, language classes, and land-based activities.
- Spaces should be trauma-informed to address stigmas, and to serve youth with dignity and without judgement.
- Create a youth council to further leadership skills and to ensure urban Indigenous youth are engaged with in matters that affect them.
- Increase educational supports and skill-development programs, such as peer tutoring, support to apply for scholarships or post-secondary, and supports for registering for classes or other programs.

RECOMMENDATION **3**

Follow up with a Community Campfire with a focus on implementation

Hold a Community Campfire with increased and broader participation, including people with the influence and authority to effect change.   The objective of the campfire will be to reflect on findings and build support for implementation.

Introduction

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) is a coalition of Indigenous organizations (and some non-Indigenous organizations) based in Surrey with a mission to be the collective voice of the urban Indigenous population in Surrey. SUILC advocates on behalf of all urban Indigenous people in Surrey and works collaboratively with other governments, organizations and individuals that are committed to understanding and achieving the SUILC Vision.

The SUILC Vision is:

A city that values Indigenous contributions to city life.
A city that is committed to working towards reconciliation
at all levels. A city where every Indigenous person has
the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

In the fall of 2022, SUILC was asked by the City of Surrey to support their Surrey Youth Resiliency Program by identifying program needs for Indigenous youth living in Surrey. The City of Surrey's Youth Resiliency Program was developed with funding from Public Safety Canada for the purpose of creating youth gang intervention programs in Surrey over the next four years (2022 – 2026).

To identify and understand how best to support Indigenous youth living in Surrey, SUILC created the *Surrey Indigenous Youth Resiliency* (SIYR) project. Following the community engagement guidelines outlined in the SUILC Statement of Community Engagement[1], the project was designed to be supportive and respectful to the urban Indigenous community in Surrey, while engaging in a meaningful way.

In keeping with SUILC guidelines for community engagement, the SIYR project included a research component to ensure that information already gathered from Indigenous communities was not neglected. A Simon Fraser University research team led by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon conducted key Informant Interviews with experts in the field who had recent and direct experience with Indigenous youth programming, and an Environmental Scan of published resources on Indigenous youth programming. The information gathered was compiled into an Environmental Scan Brief.

Also, in keeping with SUILC engagement guidelines, the engagement with Indigenous youth in Surrey honored cultural protocols, provided cultural teachings, and was careful to create positive, supportive, and meaningful experiences for the participating youth.

This report provides a description and overview our process, findings, and recommendations.

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1 https://surreyindigenousleadership.ca/downloads/suilc-community-engagement-policy.pdf

Process

Our research and engagement plans were designed to respect the Indigenous communities' assets and expertise, contribute to building the capacity of the Indigenous community in Surrey, and ultimately to create programming that has a positive impact on Indigenous youth in Surrey.

To deliver on these research and community engagement goals, a Project Committee was formed to provide direction and oversight to the process; a research team was created to conduct the academic research and analysis; and direct engagement with the youth occurred both through a series of youth engagement nights, and a youth campfire that included youth, Project Committee members, and the research team.

Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee was developed with representatives from SUILC member organizations that do work in various capacities for Indigenous youth. It included representatives from Surrey Schools, Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Center (FRAFCA), Metis Family Services, Simon Fraser University, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and the City of Surrey.   Skookum Surrey, the engagement team for SUILC, was also part of the Committee.

The role of the Project Steering Committee was to:

- Provide input and direction for the research and community engagement planning,
- Review and provide direction on an interim opportunity for funding allocation to Indigenous youth programming in Surrey, and
- Review final report recommendations to be provided to SUILC for final approval.

Members of the SIYR Project Steering Committee:

Lyn Daniels, Surrey Schools, SUILC co-chair

Samantha Jack, SUILC co-chair

Krystal Dumais, Skookum Surrey

Ravina Morgan, Skookum Surrey

Crystal Wilson, FRAFCA

Chelsey Grier, FRAFCA

Adam Calvert, Metis Family Services

Michelle Pidgeon, Simon Fraser University

Deanna Moscato, MCFD

Aileen Murphy, City of Surrey

Cleo Breton, City of Surrey

Terry Waterhouse, City of Surrey

Research

An academic team from Simon Fraser University, led by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, convened to develop an Environmental Scan Brief, including an environmental scan of Indigenous youth programs and interviews with people currently working in the field.

The environmental scan focussed on publicly available data on Indigenous youth programs in addition to input from three key informant interviews. The research followed the *Indigenous Wholistic Framework*, developed by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, which centres Indigenous ways of knowing, being connected to, and in relation with, the peoples and place in which the work is being conducted.

Indigenous Wholistic Framework (Pidgeon, 2014)

Community Engagement

Skookum Surrey hosted four sessions that were attended by twenty Indigenous youth aged 13-18 and living in Surrey. Each of the youth took part in beading a pair of Converse runners, an activity that spanned the four sessions together. Beading their runners gave the youth an ongoing activity that was fun, meaningful, and connected to Indigenous culture and teachings. Participating in an enjoyable activity also created a comfortable and safe environment for discussions.

To facilitate discussion and capture youth input in their own words, a different question was posed to the youth at each session.

1.   What are the programs/services/supports that are working well for Indigenous youth in Surrey?

2.   What are the challenges that Indigenous youth in Surrey are facing? This can be at school, in the community or at home.

3.   Are there safe spaces in Surrey for Indigenous youth? What makes them safe?

4.   If you could wave your magic wand today and create change in Surrey, what would it be?

They were asked to write their answers on a coloured diamond-shaped piece of paper which was then merged into a collage of an Indigenous star blanket design[2].

The Youth Engagement Sessions honoured Indigenous protocols and Indigenous youth's lived experiences. The evenings created a space to engage with the youth in a meaningful way that connected them with each other and their Indigenous cultures.

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2 The Indigenous Star Blanket facilitation technique is the intellectual property right of Jeska Slater and can only be used with her permission.
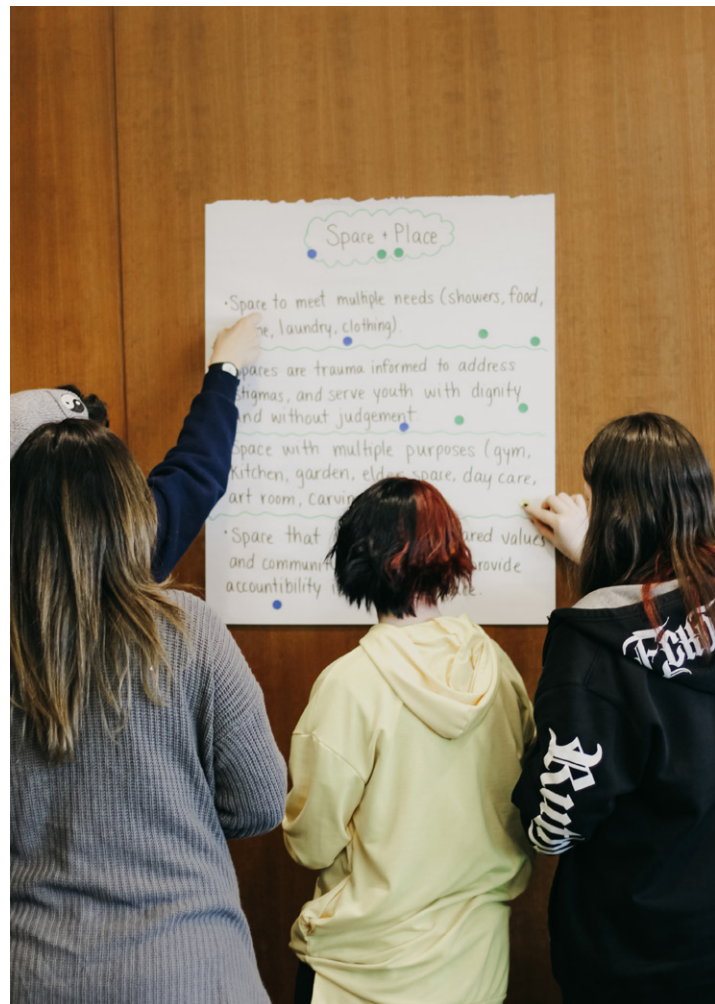
Youth Campfire

In the spirit of a traditional campfire gathering, a full day facilitated session was held that included members of the Project Steering Committee, the SFU research team, the Skookum Surrey Facilitators and the Indigenous youth that participated in the youth engagement nights.

The day was multi-generational and provided a safe and supportive environment for the youth to have their voices heard. The objectives for the day were to:

- Create a safe and welcoming space for the youth,

- Hear findings from the academic research,

- Facilitate respectful dialogue to understand and discuss research findings and personal experiences related to youth programs and program needs in Surrey, and

- Identify key goals and priorities to take away from the day.

The SFU research team presented the findings from their research and a series of small and large group discussions were facilitated to gather youth input and reflections on the academic findings. Information was gathered on flip charts, and youth were given the chance to share experiences and identify their priorities. The session ended with a full group discussion of take-aways, during which many youth expressed their positive experiences from this process.

"[From] January to now is the only time I've been in a group like this, participating in my own culture."

"I felt my experiences as a youth were validated."

- Youth Campfire Attendees

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SKOOKUM YOUTH: RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN SURREY

Findings

The following is a summary of the findings from each of the components of the SIYR project.

Environmental Scan Brief

In the literature review of Indigenous youth programs, the researchers found five key elements common to programs that were successful in supporting Indigenous youth empowerment and well-being: 1) they were youth led; 2) they offered wholistic support; 3) they incorporated cultural values and used culture as (re)connection; 4) they employed intergenerational mentorship; and 5) they were built on relationships. These themes were also re-enforced in the key informant interviews.

The following is a brief description of each of five themes and how they contributed to creating effective programs for Indigenous youth.

Youth-Led

Research shows that successful programs for youth are ones that provide the opportunity and support for youth to have meaningful input and take on leadership roles. This may include input on program design and delivery, or stepping into a role of mentorship or knowledge-holding for youth programs. Youth-led programs are empowering and valuable learning experiences for the youth; they foster programs that are relevant and connected to the youth they are seeking to serve. However, research advises that, when building youth-led programs, the youth leaders must have adequate support in place in order to successfully fill their responsibilities. Youth leadership will not work if youth are lacking in experience, training, or support to lead the program.

Wholistic Support

The theme of wholistic support came up in a variety of ways. Firstly, it was evident that the best programs for Indigenous youth were those that were wholistic in offering support, meaning they addressed the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of youth. Secondly, wholistic support means that programs are reliable and predictable for the long-term. And finally, wholistic support includes supporting the well-being of the staff who are working with the youth. Bringing together all these levels of support for youth programming is shown to be vital. However, the unfortunate challenge is trying to build these wholistic supports when funding is often short-term and unpredictable.

Culture as (Re)Connection

Indigenous youth benefit from programs that respect and value the importance of connection with family and community. Culturally grounded programming serves to teach and re-enforce Indigenous cultural knowledge and build a positive Indigenous identity.

Intergenerational Mentorship

Intergenerational connections honour Indigenous ways of educating, leading and role modelling. Indigenous youth programs that showed the most success in supporting youth and fostering their sense of well-being and belonging within the community employed intergenerational relationships rather than simply thinking about youth programs as exclusively involving youths.

Built on Relationships

Successful programs for Indigenous youth were ones where relationships were built and sustained over time. These relationships therefore grow beyond transactionality. They include intergenerational connections as well as connections with the community.

Another important highlight from the research is to avoid deficit framing terms for Indigenous youth programs. For example, the phrase "youth-at-risk", is harmful and degrading. Finding positive language, while still while still acknowledging the systemic barriers impacting their lives, can serve to support and uplift Indigenous youth, fostering positive self-perceptions as well as changing perceptions from outsiders.

Youth Engagement Sessions

"If I could create change right now I would increase the housing supply for Indigenous families."

- Youth Engagement Session Attendee

Findings from the Youth Engagement Sessions were beautifully captured in a Star Blanket exercise, a facilitation technique originally created by Jeska Slater. Jeska Slater provided her permission to Skookum Surrey to use this exercise for the youth engagement sessions.

The image of the Star Blanket below displays youth responses according to the following colour code for each question:

- Grey: What are the programs/services/supports that are working well for Indigenous youth in Surrey?

- Yellow: What are the challenges that Indigenous youth in Surrey are facing? This can be at school, community or at home.

- Peach: Are there safe spaces in Surrey for Indigenous youth? What makes it safe?

- Hot Pink: If you could wave your magic wand today and create change in Surrey, what would it be?

Indigenous Star Blanket Facilitation Technique (Slater, 2014)

The Star Blanket captures the themes and response from the youth, in their own words.

Highlights include the positive comments about programs and services that are currently offered in Surrey by the Fraser Regional Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA), the Indigenous Health Clinic, YMCA, Newton Youth Hub, Aboriginal Education in the Surrey high schools, and Skookum Surrey event and activities. Specifically, youth shared that Indigenous art and language, and LGBTQ2S themes were supported by trusted adults and support workers. It was noted that there are a lack of Indigenous programs and services offered out of South Surrey.

Youth also expressed their challenging experiences of stereotyping, discrimination, racism, hypersexualization and objectification. During the discussion, youth described their feelings of shame and secrecy around emotional and mental health, and hyper surveillance. For instance, Indigenous youth felt unsafe at the grocery stores or crossing the border because of hyper surveillance. Youth also felt unsafe because of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Other challenges identified stem from a lack of representation, inclusion, and visibility for the diversity of Indigenous people on Turtle Island, as well as tokenization of Indigenous people. Some youth felt objectified when wearing regalia.

The youth also said they would feel better if there were more recovery options for people with addictions, more housing for people experiencing homelessness, less pollution, and less cars.

When asked if they could wave their magic wand to make change in Surrey, the youth overwhelmingly responded with the following wishes:

- increase housing supply for Indigenous people to have large homes,

- create a gathering space for a variety of programs, services, supports, and community and cultural connections, and

- create more Indigenous specific programs, services, supports, and opportunities in South Surrey.

An overall take away from all the engagement sessions was how strong, resilient, and compassionate the youth were in advocating for themselves, their families and the wider urban Indigenous community. Although questions were directed to their experiences as youth, their responses consistently highlighted how important the well-being of their community is for their safety and well-being as individuals.

Youth Campfire Outcomes

"We need a safe place for Indigenous youth to gather. A place where youth don't have to ask permission to be there."

- Youth Campfire Attendee

The youth campfire was an opportunity to bring together the Project Steering Committee, the SFU research team, and those youth that had participated in the youth engagement sessions. There was a remarkable synergy among the research gathered and the input and feedback from the youth. By the end of the day, the following priorities were identified.

PLACE AND SPACE

There is a strong need and desire for cultural gathering places that are trauma-informed, meet multiple basic needs, and are multi-purposed. Going beyond the purpose of the place, these spaces need to be guided by community agreements and shared values as well as being capable of addressing stigma and supporting youth with compassion.

CAPACITY BUILDING

There is a strong need and desire for youth programs to build further capacity for our youth to succeed by providing them with a range of skills. Youth at the Campfire identified education, employment, and life skills as the three main areas of interest, as well as a range of other trainings like Naloxone training, familiarization with paperwork, and having access to the support of therapists and councillors.

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Revitalizing culture is of high importance to Indigenous youth in Surrey. There is a specific interest in connecting with Elders and mentors, the greater urban community, and practicing cultural activities.

SERVICES AND ROLES

There is a need and desire to increase services, roles, and opportunities to support Indigenous youth in Surrey. Programs should connect further with partners and other service providers to create a community and ensure a culture of collective 'best practices' when supporting Indigenous youth. Programs should consider creating an 'access coordinator' position, whose sole purpose is to find opportunities for youth and connect them. A youth council is needed to further leadership skills and to ensure urban Indigenous youth are engaged with in matters that affect them.

BIG DREAMS

The youth campfire provided the opportunity for youth to use their creativity to develop the following list of innovative and exciting 'big dream' ideas for Indigenous youth in Surrey:

- Indigenous Youth Culture Exchange where we meet other Indigenous youth across Turtle Island.

- To have our own shed of canoes for use, maybe even ones we have carved together.

- Construction of a community longhouse with a local nation and celebrate together.

- Create a support centre for LGBTQ2S+ with access to health care, free gender affirming clothes, and support/therapy.

- Lower transit fares or free compass cards for Indigenous youth.

- Own our own entertainment space – community theater with playwright programs, acting, etc. Could turn into a space we could rent out to others for income which will feed back into youth programs.

- Programs that will fly youth to their home territories and back to foster reconnection with identity and family.

- Open an Urban Indigenous Recreation Centre, open 24/7, free, with an Urban Indigenous Basketball team that can compete in the First Nations Basketball League.

"We need healthcare for queer and 2S youth. It is hard to get healthcare for underage youth who are trans or 2S. A lot of places don't take us seriously or you have to jump through hoops to feel like yourself, especially when you're in a house that doesn't support you. People are dying because of lack of access to gender affirming care, this includes mental health."

- Youth Campfire Attendee

Summary of Findings

"Nothing for us without us"

- Youth Engagement Session Attendee

The Environmental Scan Brief identified five themes incorporated by programs that were successful in supporting Indigenous youth well-being and empowerment. These themes were: Youth Led, Wholistic Support, Culture as (Re)connection, Intergenerational Mentorship, and Built on Relationships. Findings from the youth engagement sessions and the youth campfire re-enforced each of these categories and identified priorities for their implementation.

"Youth Led" means that programs create the space and support for youth to have meaningful involvement in both their communities and in leading youth programming. This concept identified in the research was re-enforced by youth engagement contributions that shared positive experiences when given the opportunity to take on leadership and mentorship roles. Youth also demonstrated the value they can contribute when given the opportunity to suggest program ideas that will provide meaningful support to Indigenous youth living in Surrey. Overall, it is evident in the findings that youth have a lot to contribute, and thus demonstrate the value of having youth programs that are "Youth Led".

Discussions with youth about ways to better support Indigenous youth in Surrey touched on a wide range of programming ideas. These include academic support to increase Indigenous student graduation rate, recreational opportunities for Indigenous youth to come together to connect with their communities and their culture. They also responded positively to having youth support workers and trusted adults to provide emotional and mental health supports. These discussions and input exemplify the tenets of "Wholistic Support" as described in the Environmental Scan, where programs cover the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of youth.

Furthermore, personal experiences and insights shared by participants at the youth campfire concurred with the concept that support for the staff delivering the youth programs is an integral part of "Wholistic Support".

The concepts of "Culture as (Re)connection", and "Intergenerational Mentorship" were captured when youth shared their desire to have opportunities for Indigenous cultural teachings and connections with Indigenous Elders. Youth were also passionate about the importance of supporting the community and respecting the value of intergenerational connections which in turn supports youth well-being.

The value of "Built on Relationships" was evident in witnessing the success of the youth engagement sessions run by Skookum Surrey. The Skookum Surrey facilitators created a safe and stable environment to engage with

the youth. They were mindful of making the experience respectful and were careful to avoid a transactional relationship. Real and meaningful connections were built though these engagement sessions, and in the campfire closing circle the youth shared their appreciation for this.

Facilitated discussions at the youth campfire summarized four key priorities for the youth: Place and Space, Capacity Building, Cultural Connection, and Service and Role. Each fit with the research findings and give direction on the tools needed to implement meaningful supports for Indigenous youth in Surrey.

Next Steps

This report reflects research on Indigenous youth programming and engagement with Indigenous youth living in Surrey. Moving forward SUILC will continue to work toward the three recommendations of this report:

1. Develop programming for Indigenous youth that builds on best practices from elsewhere.
2. Honour Indigenous youth voices from Surrey.
3. Follow up with a Community Campfire with a focus on implementation.

"This is a generation of cycle-breakers"

- Youth Engagement Session Attendee

All Our Relations.

Appendix 1

Environmental Scan Brief

Skookum Youth

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN SURREY

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Environmental Scan Brief

In order to make recommendations to develop programming to promote Indigenous Youth resilience in Surrey, British Columbia, the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) partnered with a team of researchers from Simon Fraser University (SFU) to complete an environmental scan of Indigenous Youth Resiliency Programs in Canada and conduct key informant interviews. This brief will inform the larger SUILC project aimed at giving the Surrey Indigenous Youth Resilience (SIYR) Project Committee research-informed evidence to inform, develop, and evaluate said programming.

The SFU research team includes Amelia Boissoneau (Ojibway ancestry), Andrea Leveille (settler, uninvited guest on Coast Salish lands), Megan Rosso (Carrier Sekani ancestry), Joe Tobin (settler and Nlaka'pamux ancestry), Marcia Mejia-Blanco (Nahua Indigenous), and Dr. Michelle Pidgeon (Mi'kmaq/Settler ancestries).

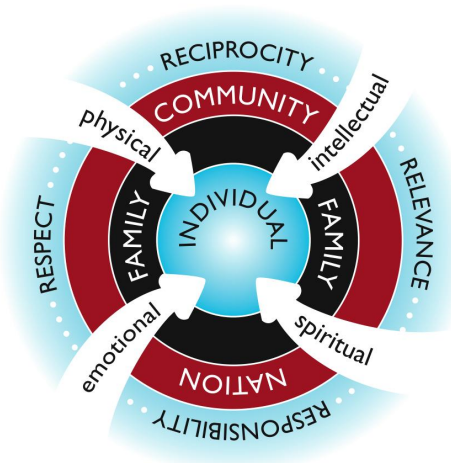## Methods

Indigenous Wholistic Framework

Figure 1. Indigenous Wholistic Framework (Pidgeon, 2014)

In considering research by and for Indigenous peoples, we drew upon the Indigenous Wholistic Framework (Pidgeon, 2014) to inform this project from the research purpose, design, analysis, to the knowledge sharing (e.g., this brief).

The Indigenous Wholistic Framework (IWF) centres Indigenous ways of knowing and being as connected to, and in relation with, the peoples and place in which this work is being conducted. Recognizing the traditional landholders of the Katzie, Kwantlen, Semiamhoo, and Tsawwassen First Nations, Surrey is also home to the largest urban Indigenous population in British Columbia. The IWF acknowledges the interconnections of place, land, and peoples engaged in this work. It also holds up the emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical needs of individuals, families, communities, and others. Furthermore, the 4Rs of Respect, Relevance, Relationships, and Reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) become the Indigenous-informed values that guide our research relationships with SUILC, and those who participate in this research along with our research practices.

Project Timeline & Scope

This research was conducted between December 2022 and February 2023, with the very specific goals of: 1. Identifying key factors that support Indigenous Youth programming through an environmental scan; and 2. Understanding what makes such programming successful through key informant interviews.

Research Design

Environmental Scan: The team collected publically available data from Indigenous Youth program websites. Data collected included program descriptions and support, the age range the program was offered to, the location and timing of the programs, who supported said programs, and anything about the programs that stood out to researchers. The search was organized to target programs that are south of the Stó:lō (Fraser river), provincially available, and nationally available. The team also searched for exemplary programs in Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand). The research team feels confident that the data available has captured the intentions of the programs and the results have returned more than eight programs that the team feels are exemplary. Exemplar programs stood out for their ability to provide support across the four realms of emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical; their commitment to providing stable, predictable programming over time (i.e., longevity); and their

attention to the transition of the Youth into new life stages, either through programming available across a lifetime or through a transition program.

The environmental scan also included a review of the relevant literature exploring Indigenous Youth programming. Given the rapidly changing social landscape, the literature search specifically targeted research conducted in the last five years (2018-2023) although the team also looked for work that would be considered foundational to the field. The literature was examined to understand what researchers, program staff, and Indigenous Youth identified as needs and desires for such programming. The literature review also sought to identify key attributes of impactful programming for Indigenous Youth.

Key Informant Interviews: Based on the criteria of currently working in Indigenous Youth programming, key informant interviews were initially planned with 6 - 8 participants in mind. Upon receiving ethics approval from the SFU Office of Research ethics, letters of invitation were sent to 49 potential participants. We heard from seven participants who were busy but expressed interest in the project and thought they could participate or they could pass the project information along to other potential participants. In order to provide as many options as possible for the participants to speak with us, we offered the option to submit a written response to those who expressed interest. The time constraints of the project funding and the busy schedules of potential participants limited how many participants we were able to speak with.

In the end, we received three written responses and spoke with one participant in person. The four participants received a $50 gift certificate in appreciation for their time and the sharing of their insights. There was equal representation of Indigenous (N=2) and non-Indigenous (N=2) participants. Two of the participants worked for an Indigenous friendship centre and the other two worked for school districts.

Research Ethics

Given the position of the principal investigator (Dr. Pidgeon) as a faculty member at SFU, the research team sought ethics approval for this project to support the community-based research set out in this report. This ensured that participants in the interviews were informed about why they were being invited to participate, and, more importantly, how their stories would be used in research, and the summaries shared with SUILC. The research team is

committed to upholding the Tri-Council Guidelines for Researching with Indigenous Peoples and the principles of OCAP © (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession). In that regard, the publicly collected data from the environmental scan has been shared with SUILC. Interview participants have been provided with a copy of their audio recording and transcript for verification and their records. Furthermore, only the summary of themes (not the full transcripts) has been shared with SUILC to uphold participant confidentiality.

Analysis

During the environmental scan, the research team examined the programming along a common set of criteria (e.g., program description, supports available, program location, etc) based on the content of the publicly available websites. [see Appendix A for data tables]. Utilizing the IWF as a guide, the types of support offered by the programs were collected and organized in the realms of Intellectual, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual.

The research team defined **Intellectual supports** as activities that offered Indigenous Youth opportunities to explore academic and employment skills.

Emotional supports were defined as activities that actively helped the Youth to connect to and care for personal and social-emotional well-being.

Our definition of **Physical supports** encompassed programming that focused on the physical world of the Youth, including physical fitness, access to food, housing, medical care, and support in navigating the legal system.

The research team defined **Spiritual supports** as activities or programming that attended to the complex interconnections of Indigenous cultures and ways of being (e.g., cultural programming, ceremonies, cultural events).

Interviews were thematically coded using the same process, informed by the IWF. Specifically, interviews provided more contextual information (beyond what was on the websites) [see Appendix C for interview guide].

Limitations and Delimitations

The research was limited by the short duration, and the constraints of using publicly available information from websites. Additionally, it was difficult to measure the impact of COVID on the team's ability to find and verify information

about programs. The public health restrictions in the period leading up to the start of the research mean that many programs may have been paused, closed down, or shifted to an online platform. As such, it was difficult to ascertain how these programs were offered before public health restrictions came into effect. This combined with the limited information available on websites means that the picture of programs may lack detail.

An additional limitation is that while we had a common set of criteria to evaluate each program, there is individual variation in the interpretation of these criteria. To mitigate this, we did undertake some inter-rater reliability checks (e.g., research members cross-checked each other's work). However, we recognize that there is still room for the difference within this approach and see it as a strength of having multiple perspectives within the analysis.

Another limitation to be mindful of is regarding the funding for some programming. For example, we found a few programs noted federal funding in terms of short-term COVID support. We chose not to include this type of support for previously established or ongoing programs in our tallies as it was temporary and may otherwise inflate federal support numbers.

This project was delimited to Indigenous Youth programming for the 10-18 age group. Programs were included if they overlapped that age group and were excluded if they did not support anyone between the ages of 10 - 18. The team also focused more closely on a Canadian, BC, and South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) context. While we did look at exemplars in Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand), due to time and limited resources we did not focus extensively on internationally-based programs.

Findings and Discussion

Literature Themes

The scope of the literature included research from 2015-2022 and was inclusive of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and white papers (e.g., publicly available reports and documents). Themes of **youth-led**, **wholistic support**, **culture as (re)connection**, **intergenerational mentorship**, and **built on relationships** emerged as programming strengths in supporting Indigenous Youth empowerment and well-being.

Much of the literature focused on the positive potential of programming that offered Indigenous Youth **wholistic support** - programs that offered support for the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the Youth (Barnett et al., 2020; Ferguson et al., 2021; Flouris et al., 2016; Good et al., 2021; Government of Canada, 2019; Hodgson et al., 2022; B. Lewis et al., 2022; Lopresti et al., 2021, 2022; Lund et al., 2022; Macgregor et al., 2015; Montesanti et al., 2022; Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec, 2020, 2020; Robbins et al., 2017; Sobierajski et al., 2022; Sommerfeld et al., 2022; Toombs et al., 2021). Part of the responsibility of attending to the wholistic needs of Youth includes consistent and persistent programming - Youth were clear that they needed supports that were reliable and predictable for the long term (Flouris et al., 2016; Pidgeon et al., 2019).

Literature that presented wholistic programming often described **culture as (re)connection** - where culturally grounded programming served as a connection to a good life or as a beacon for those who wish to make their way toward a good life (Barnett et al., 2020; Ferguson et al., 2021; Good et al., 2021; Government of Canada, 2019; Hodgson et al., 2022; M. E. Lewis et al., 2022; Lund et al., 2022; Montesanti et al., 2022; Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec, 2020, 2020; Robbins et al., 2017; Schaefer et al., 2017; Toombs et al., 2021). Research has shown that Indigenous ideas of living a good life diverge from Western ideas of success by focusing on a balance of individual career and life goals with their roles and responsibilities within family and community (Andrade, 2014; Barney, 2018; Brayboy & Maaka, 2015; Curtis, 2015; Harder et al., 2016; King, 2008; Lydster & Murray, 2020; Makomenaw, 2014; Pidgeon, 2016; Uink et al., 2019).

Effective programming for Indigenous Youth is **built on relationships** (Ferguson et al., 2021; Flouris et al., 2016; Government of Canada, 2019; M. E. Lewis et al., 2022; Lopresti et al., 2021, 2021; Macgregor et al., 2015; Montesanti et al., 2022; Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec, 2020, 2020; Robbins et al., 2017, 2017; Schaefer et al., 2017; Sobierajski et al., 2022; Toombs et al., 2021) that are sustained over time, which honours the 4th R of relationship in the IWF. These relationships move beyond transactional; they are built and relied upon among the program staff and the Youth, and the Youth and their communities (Flouris et al., 2016; Lopresti et al., 2022; Toombs et al., 2021) in order to support Youth well-being and their sense of belonging. This relationality also connects to **intergenerational mentorship** (Lopresti et al., 2021, 2022; Mentor Canada, 2022; Pidgeon et al., 2019) within youth programming (e.g., presence of Elders, staff to youth, and peer-to-peer).

These intergenerational connections honour Indigenous ways of educating, leading, and role modelling. Such relationships then, as reflected in the IWF, are interconnecting the individual youth and extend to their families, communities, and nations.

The literature also identifies the importance of Indigenous Youth taking the lead in programming that is designed for their needs (Ferguson et al., 2021; Flouris et al., 2016; Hodgson et al., 2022; Ivanich et al., 2020; B. Lewis et al., 2022; Lopresti et al., 2020, 2021, 2022; Schaefer et al., 2017; Sobierajski et al., 2022; Toombs et al., 2021). **Youth-led** programming ensures that Youth have a say, and also respects their autonomy, and their ability to participate in the ways that they need to, and allows them to step into their role as mentors and knowledge holders.

As we reviewed the literature, there were concerns raised and cautions put forward by several scholars on the deficit framing of Indigenous Youth (e.g., innately "at-risk") (M. E. Lewis et al., 2022; Schaefer et al., 2017). There is a general acknowledgement that for systemic reasons, Indigenous Youth and families are over-represented in the criminal system, and foster care system, have lower education and health outcomes, and subsequently, lower socio-economic status. However, we also recognize that many federal, provincial, and other financial supports use those same terms within their calls for proposals; which leaves organizations and researchers with the conundrum and tension of "using the language" to get the funds - while at the same time pushing back on these Western-imposed categorizations of Indigenous Youth. Indigenous youth resurgence and resilience (albeit this term is also problematic - as it is the systemic issues that require youth to push back and assert resilience) may be a stronger frame from which to build programming. It is important to resist deficit thinking and support and lift up Indigenous Youth, while acknowledging the systemic barriers impacting their lives, and working towards systemic change so that Indigenous Youth can thrive while achieving their education, career, and life goals.

Indigenous Youth Programming Across Canada

Programs Available By Province For Indigenous Youth

=171 total

8
6
4
6
67
16
16
15
13 *
5
5
3
7

National Programs available Coast to cost: **38**

*Ontario (and other provinces) had programs available at dozens of community and friendship centres

Figure 2. Map of Indigenous Youth focused programs available

Who provided the program supports

The question of who provided program supports was broken down into five primary categories: *Community, Municipal, Provincial, Federal, and Corporate*[1]. We defined the act of supporting a program as being inclusive of actively (running the program/events) or financially (including providing physical space/resources). See **Table 1** in the appendix for the full matrix of supports.

At the national program level, of the 38 programs identified, the two most common providers of support came from *Community* (N=25) and *Provincial* agencies (N=23). A quarter of the national programs (N=10) received some sort of *Federal* support. National programs were less likely to be funded by *Municipal* (N=3) or *Corporate* (N=5) sources.

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[1] Please note themes are in italics to differentiate terms as commonly used in the research literature and throughout the rest of this briefing document.

When looking at the 134 programs offered at the provincial level (excluding those offered locally south of the Stó:lō (Fraser river)), the top two sources of support were *Community* (N=53) and *Provincial* (N=51). Provincially, it seems that programs were less likely to be supported by *Municipal* (N=24), *Federal* (N=27), and *Corporate* (N=23) sources. We recognized in our analysis that some provincially funded programs were offered on multiple-sites (though were only counted once in our database). This was most noticeable in Ontario where the province funded a handful of programs that were delivered across dozens of Indigenous friendship and community centres.

Some programs' providers had specific funders listed for specific programs, but not all providers went into this much detail in their funding reporting. If a provider did not go into detail, we endeavoured to only list one source of funding for the broad range of programs offered.

Indigenous Youth programming offered in the South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) area (N=37) was similar to the wider provincial findings with *Community* (N=23) and *Provincial* (N=20) being the most common. *Municipal* (N=12), *Federal* (N=8) and *Corporate* (N=12) support was seen to be half (or less) as common.

Two outlier funders were found that utilized international funding. Nationally,, the Native Women's Association of Canada [NWAC] offered employment and mental health programming. While NWAC was funded by *Municipal* and *Federal* sources it also had a partnership with *The Trust for the Americas*, a non-profit organization which primarily operates in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the south of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) area, Youth Unlimited Langley had *Municipal* funding as well as *Youth for Christ*, an international Christian ministry financially supporting their program.

The International Picture

Seven international programs were reviewed, four of these programs were offered in Australia and the other three were located in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Please refer to **Table 2** in the appendix for full details of the programs reviewed.

Similar to the Canadian context, programming in Australia and Aotearoa was also commonly funded at the provincial/state (N=7) level. Unlike the Canadian context, these international programs seemed less likely to have community-level support (N=4). This is not necessarily indicative of levels of community engagement however as several of the programs' websites were

scant on details about the programs. Contacting the programs directly would be necessary to fully understand the funding structure.

Youth Mob in Australia was an outlier for including international funding alongside provincial/state and federal funding. Youth Mob was funded by *World Vision*, an international Christian organization.

Who led the programs

Similar to the previous details on programs, the question of whether or not a program was Indigenous-led varied greatly depending on the geographic area. For programs offered at the national level these details were scarce with information only available for less than half (N=15) of the programs (N=38). Of these, six were Indigenous-led, nine were not and the rest were unable to be categorized. Looking at the provincial level, more information was readily available. Of the 134 provincial programs, more than half (N=71) were Indigenous-led, whereas 41 were not. The questions of who led the South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) programs was easier to identify than at the national level but the division was far different than at the provincial. Seven of the total programs surveyed (N=37) were Indigenous-led whereas the majority (N=27) were not; only three programs did not have enough information to classify.

These findings are different than what we saw in the supports section where the provincial and South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) support numbers were similar. Provincial programs were far more likely to be Indigenous-led though analysis was not done to conclusively discern why. The research team wondered if it was because provincial programs were often found through friendship centres and band websites.

We did not examine the international programs for their status of being Indigenous-led or not.

What these programs offered

As previously described, the research team used the IWF to organize the programs' support into the categories of Intellectual, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual. It is important to remember that the definitions of each realm are not discrete, instead, these supports are interconnected and interwoven and a single activity may provide support in more than one realm. The research team placed program supports into a realm by assessing which category of support it seemed to serve first.

The research team developed a shorthand using the first letter of each support domain (e.g., program/s offering support in all four realms would be (I)ntellectual (E)motional, (P)hysical, (S)pritual or IEPS, similarly a program/s offering (I)ntellectual and (P)hysical would be IP) to identify the supports being offered by each program. Many programs often offered support in combination with one another. See **Table 3** in the appendix for a more complete picture of the combinations of supports offered.

As the IWF guides us, place informs and guides the cultural knowledges and practices of the peoples. For example, we observed a similar trend in which of the relams (Intellectual, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual), or combinations of realms showed up in the programs was dependent on the geographic area. For example, when looking at:
- National programs (N=38), the top two support combinations were IE (N=11) and IEPS (N=7)
- At the Provincial level (N=109) (excluding South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river)) the top two combinations were IEPS (N=51) and IEP (N=24)
- South of the Stó:lō (Fraser river) (N=27), the two most common supports were P (N=8) and I (N=6)

As the literature has shown, wholistic programming (IEPS) shows the most promise for supporting Indigenous Youth. An examination of the Indigenous Youth programming landscape in Canada showed us that almost 50% of provincial program/centres offered wholistic programing, while wholistic programs made up slightly less than 20% of all program offerings at the national level and south of the Stó:lō (Fraser river). This gap presents an exciting opportunity for the SIYR project committee to develop programming focused on all four realms.

Presenting the distribution of supports in numbers is only one way to understand the picture of supports in Indigenous Youth programming. The research team also looked at each realm category to get a better understanding of the most common supports being offered.

Intellectual supports most often looked like academic support (tutoring, new learning opportunities, trade skills, mentorship), arts (not rooted in culture) (theatre, painting, sculpture, arts technology) and life skills (culinary skills, financial planning, leadership training, technology skills, safety training).

Emotional supports were inclusive of supports like mental health support (individual counselling, group counselling, crisis support, healing work, addiction counselling), interpersonal skills development (communication, comedy) and mental health support skills development (healthy relationships, sexual violence and exploitation awareness, suicide intervention skills). Emotional supports are also interconnected with Elder connections or peer mentoring.

Physical supports most often included recreational opportunities like sports, yoga, dance (not cultural), outdoor programs; financial interventions such as employment services, transportation, food security, cost-free activities; legal advocacy and medical advocacy.

Spiritual supports most often looked like cultural connections (Elders, cultural groups), ceremony (protocols, participation in, regalia), cultural workshops (language, teachings), land-based activities (land stewardship, traditional harvesting, medicine picking), and cultural skills (storytelling, weaving, traditional handwork, dancing, land stewardship).

It is worth noting that many programs provided Youth access to people who could act as advocates- for housing, medical care, legal support, and financial support. These navigator roles were different from mentors as their primary function did not seem to be skill transfer but instead seemed to provide a more balanced power dynamic for Youth when engaging with outside agencies.

Exemplar programs

As outlined in the research design section, exemplar programs stood out for their ability to provide supports across the four realms (IEPS), their commitment to providing stable, predictable programming over time (i.e., longevity), and their attention to the transition of the Youth into new life stages, either through programming available across a lifetime or through a transition program.

One program that embodied this definition of exemplary programming was Ka Ni Kanichihk in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ka Ni Kanichihk offered several programs for Youth, including two for 9-13 girls and one for under 12 boys, aimed at supporting the whole child, in their intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. Older Youth can visit the Youth Hub, where they can access a variety of support all in one space. Additional programming aims to support Youth who have relocated to Winnipeg for their education - connecting these Youth with

peer mentors who guide them further supports their whole well-being. All of these programs were offered from a community space that is also offering programs for children, adults, and Elders, creating an opportunity for the Youth to remain connected to community and culture and attend to their whole self as they move through all of the stages of their lives. The program provided testimonials from adults who had participated in Youth programming and had recently moved to a purpose-built building, providing evidence that the program has been stable over time and is investing in its future.

A program that illustrates how to provide a transition for Youth was the Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness [CRUW] program based in Vancouver, BC. CRUW targeted Youth-in-care ages 12-15 for the main program which is a year-long experience of planting and growing crops alongside workshops. Like the Ka Ni Kanichinhk program, CRUW supported the whole Youth across the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual realms. Following the Youths graduation from the program, they are invited back to be mentors for subsequent Youth attendees. Youth-mentors are given mentorship training and offered the opportunity to sit on a youth mentor committee. Further training is available to become involved with the sales of extra produce and other goods created by the program. The proceeds from these sales help to support the program. After Youth have aged out of the Youth-in-care provincial system they are offered the chance to return as volunteers helping Youth, and mentors, as well as aiding program staff and Elders in delivering the program. Although this program does not offer the breadth of programming available through Ka Ni Kanichihk, it is a great example of a more focused program that offers wholistic support, is predictable and stable, and is attentive to supporting Youth through their transitions into new life stages.

We provide the above examples to demonstrate that programs can be focused or scaled up and still effectively provide good support for Indigenous Youth - support that ensures that they are seen as a whole person, can rely on the program to be there when they need it, and remain connected throughout their lives.

Key Informant Interviews

The four participants who were directly involved in supporting and delivering Indigenous Youth programming shared insights about what makes successful programming for Indigenous youth and that parallels some of the themes we encountered in the literature review. The participants' responses were coded

using the IWF as a framework and during the coding process emergent coding allowed for any new, emergent, or unique ideas to also be part of the analysis.

Wholistic.

Participants were reiterative in stating program elements that worked well connected to: providing safety, supporting vulnerability, housing, wrap around supports, and focusing on growing and supporting the Youth's gifts. One participant emphasized the importance of staff being tuned into the gifts of the Youth that they may have developed mental barriers about, and how to develop processes for breaking down those barriers.

Participants urged for the removal of logistical barriers for delivering programs to Youth as such barriers led to program drop out or low uptake. Youth in care barrier removal. Participants noted some rules around Youth in care are difficult for care-givers to manage or understand, so a good working relational between family/youth services and the program centre staff is incredibly valuable to the Youth and their caregivers. This becomes even more important for emancipated Youth or Youth who are not in supportive circumstance.

An interesting new dimension of wholistic support to consider emerged from the interviews and was not found in the literature. Participants reminded us that wholistic extends beyond the individual and considers the wholeness of those who are supporting and delivering the programs. They were clear on the necessity to ensure staff are well supported as their health and well-being affects the programs and the youth they serve.

Culture as (re)connection.

Staff saw programs as a space where Youth could feel safe exploring their cultural backgrounds. This recognizes the disconnection to cultural practices that many Indigenous Youth are faced with due to colonial impacts on their families and communities. Within their programs, staff understand these impacts, particularly on urban Indigenous Youth. Participants saw their programs as having a focus on making the Youth feel welcome and supported in their journey to cultural wellness and knowledge.

Intergenerational mentorship.

Two of the four participants described how their programs provided opportunities for Youth to work with other Youth and to develop leadership skills. Participants

also spoke to the importance of mentorship from community knowledge-holders. One participant specifically mentioned the importance of inviting knowledge-holders from the Youth's community, really celebrating community knowledge from a variety of places. This provides another way for Youth to reconnect to their culture. While another participant shared their personal experience of being mentored as a Youth - how that mentorship opened them up to seeing their own gifts and provided them access to other Indigenous Youth in the community.

Youth led.

Supporting the theme "Youth led" that we identified in the research literature, participants also felt that Youth-led programming supported building self-confidence and connections. One participant saw that Youth being able to choose their own programming was working extremely well. The participant advised that program staff focus on the goals and interests of the Youth, giving the Youth the autonomy to request meetings, explore their interests without pressure, and ask for support when they want or need it. The participant felt that this ultimately provided a stronger sense of achievement. All participants reiterated in some way or another the importance of remembering that Youth know what is best for them and their knowledge and gifts are as valuable as any other people in the room.

A caution emerged from participants regarding Youth-led programming, when staff are Youth themselves they may lack the experience and training needed to enact the program. This insight is an important consideration for the training and wholistic support of staff. This also speaks to the need to wholistically support all involved in Indigenous Youth programming inclusive of the staff, Elders, knowledge holders, Indigenous Youth, families, and communities.

Built on relationships.

There was a concern among the participants that sometimes the programs may not be visible to the Youth - this was something the research team experienced in the environmental scan. One of the participants described an important impact of the program is their focus on reaching out to as many Indigenous Youth as possible. These concerns about visibility and the focus on reaching out shows how relationship building is relied upon by programs and the Youth.

All participants emphasized that attending to relationships is important, as is thinking about capacity within the staff and Indigenous Youth community. They felt that good relationships require effort and overextending or imposing upon those relationships undermines their quality. Again, within this caution there is a lesson to be learned for future program development - be cautious about overextending and ensure building and sustaining good relationships is at the heart of the work. Participant's focusing on where relationships are working in their programs illuminated how relationships are fundamental to supporting the success of the Youth and the program.

Stable and predictable.

It was clear from the literature review that program stability and reliability was important to ensure that Indigenous Youth and their communities could count on the programming provided. This also harkens back to program accessibility and visibility - if it is not known, or perceived as a one-off initiative, there will be little buyin from the Youth, families, and/or community.

A consideration raised by some of the participants was the limitation of long-term financial and Human Resources. For example, one participant shared that their program was tied to a three year grant, but beyond that grant they were not sure how the program will be supported. This is an example of how funding can result in programs that Youth cannot count on in the long term.

Another facet of stable and predictable programming that emerged was the stability and predictability of the staff. One participant felt that low staff turnover was important for program developers to consider in any new initiatives.

Another participant shared they worked with a family services organization that restricted access to programming for Indigenous Youth - such limitations run counter to an inclusive and supportive community that the literature and other participants spoke about as vital to the success of Indigenous Youth programming. These types of restrictions also send clear messages of who belongs and does not belong - if we are attempting to support Indigenous Youth in urban settings, then who can participate should be as barrier free as possible.

Summary

Key insights for Indigenous Youth Programs

grounded in culture · predictable and stable · whole life · youth-led · built on relationships · wholistic · intergenerational mentorship

Indigenous youth are capable and strong

Based on what we have learned, consider the following in program development:

Indigenous youth are capable and strong. Continue to be resistant to the deficit discourse of youth-at-risk. Instead, co-create programming that is **youth-led** and empowers Youth from a place of capability and strength.

Commit to **wholistic programming** to address the whole needs of the Youth, their families, and communities. Recognize that good programming is **built on relationships** and encourage all partners to hold those relationships close and maintain them with care and commitment.

Ensure that programming is **grounded in culture** and includes opportunities for **intergenerational mentorship** and connections.

Finally, provide programming that is **predictable and stable**, giving Youth the time and space to reach their goals. Consider programming that expands from whole Youth to **whole life,** providing Youth with opportunities to feel supported as they transition into new life stages and embrace their role in generational change.

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Appendix A - Data Tables

Table 1*. Who provided the program supports

	National	Provincial	South of Stó:lō (Fraser river)
Community	25	53	23
Municipal	3	24	12
Provincial	23	51	20
Federal	10	27	8
Corporate	8	23	12

*Corporate supports at the national level may be underreported due to lack of detail or access in annual and/or financial reports as partner lists were not always available.

Table 2. International program supports

	International
Community	4
Municipal	1
Provincial/State	7
Federal	3
Corporate	2

Table 3. Breakdown of types of programs

	National	Provincial	South of Stó:lō (Fraser river)
I (Intellectual)	3	4	6
E (Emotional)	1	1	-
P (Physical)	4	4	8
S (Spiritual)	-	1	-
IE	11	4	3
IEP	6	24	-
IES	1	4	-
IP	2	8	1
IPS	1	3	-
EP	2	1	3
EPS	-	3	-
ES	-	1	-
PS	-	-	1
IEPS	7	51	5
*total:	38	109	27

* Total of provincial + South of the Fraser programs is less than total numbers listed on Fig 2. (Map of Indigenous Youth focused programs available): This is due to some centres having only a single entry for types of supports offered over several programs

Appendix B - Exemplar programs

<u>Future is Yours</u>
- Program based in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Allows youth to develop skills for employment
- Covers all types: IEPS
- I like that they offer employment opportunities after program completion with the City of Winnipeg's recreation department and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata's summer green team.
- More of a development approach than just offering activities

<u>Restoring the Sacred (RTS)</u>
- Program based in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Mentorship model approach, mentees are 14-21 and mentors are 16-29
- Covers all types: IEPS
- Has one of the most extensive support lists I have seen in all areas of education, life skills, recreational activities and cultural activities.

<u>CRUW (Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness)</u>
- Program based in Vancouver, BC (UBC gardens / transportation provided)
- Youth learn to grow their own food over a complete growth cycle (seasons); they get to take home what they grow
- team exercises and workshops (staff book/respond to youth needs for workshops)
- Covers all types: IEPS
- Graduating youth are invited to learn to mentor subsequent years, them may volunteer after the mentor years

<u>Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound</u>
- Program based throughout Ontario at multiple friendship centres
- Young, single parent Indigenous mothers (youth-age) focus of program
- Multi-phase provincial program that uses the wrap around supports friendship centres have to offer progression from skills-training, formal education, then apprentice-ship to employment
- Covers all types: IEPS

- Interesting play on the Outward Bound (program) in that it encourages community connections and post-secondary training in areas which will benefit communities and the mother
- Underserved population targeted with supports

Ka Ni Kanichihk
- Program based in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Supports across 4 realms (I,E,P,S)
- Programming focuses on children but encompasses multiple life stages - childcare to youth support to family activities to Elder support services
- Youth programming offers options developed for the needs of girls and boys separately (with a note that the gender categories are inclusive of any youth who feel best in a space labelled for girls or for boys)
- Program has testimonials from adults who took youth programming (longevity) and has recently expanded (stability)

Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad:
- Program based in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Supports across 4 realms (I,E,P,S)
- Prioritizes immediate and reliable programming for youth who are in urgent need
- Supports offer opportunities for transition, from emergency shelter, to independent living, while also offering a variety to culturally informed supports and activities to support the youth as a whole person
- Youth are offered an opportunity to sit on the Ndinawe Youth Board, which aims to give youth a voice in their community and shape the future of the centre

ACCESS:
- Program based in Surrey, BC
- wrap around education and training supports
- blade runners program for youth at risk
- youth employment center
- ESAF essentials skills center
- One-on-one employment supports
- funding/ training opportunities available

FRAFCA:
- Program based in Surrey BC
- All Nations Youth Safe House

- Indigenous Youth Connections Program
- Indigenous Youth Urgent Needs Worker
- Indigenous Youth Outreach & Empowerment Services
- Surrey Indigenous Youth Advisory Committee
- Youth Culture Night
- Indigenous Youth Reaching Home Outreach Program

Kikékyelc: A Place of Belonging:
- Program based in Kamloops BC
- a culturally safe, fully supported, 31 unit condo style development that houses Indigenous youth between the ages of 16 & 27, along with Indigenous Elders.

Appendix C - Interview Guide

Interview Questions For Staff

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself and your role within your
   program/organization.

2. We are interested to know more about your program and why it was
   developed?

3. How do you think about "program impact" –describe what that means for
   your program
   a. On youth, their families, the community?

4. What's working well for your program and what is missing?

5. What advice would you have for others wanting to develop Indigenous youth
   programming?

Appendix D - Researcher Bios

Amelia Boissoneau

Aaniin. My name is Amelia Boissoneau, I was born and raised in Treaty 6 Territory in Saskatchewan. I am a mixed-race Ojibway woman and am a member of the Ketegaunseebee (Garden River First Nation), and I belong to the crane clan. I became an urban Indigenous woman who came to BC to pursue my undergraduate degree at Simon Fraser University.

Megan Rosso

Hadih, My name is Megan Rosso, I am a Carrier mixed Sekani woman, I am a member of the Lake Babine Nation. I come from the house of the firekeepers, and I belong to the Caribou clan. I have been raised as an urban Indigenous woman throughout BC, residing on about 15 various Indigenous territories. I came to the Lower Mainland to pursue my undergraduate degree at Simon Fraser University.

Joe Tobin

My name is Joe Tobin. I am from a family of both Indigenous & settler heritage; I am a member of a Nlaka'pamux First Nation living and working on unceded Coast Salish territories. I have recently completed a Master of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology at Simon Fraser University. I have worked with Dr. Michelle Pidgeon as a Research Assistant since 2019.

Andrea Leveille

My name is Andrea Leveille. I am a settler of Irish and Scottish ancestry. I was born on land stewarded by the Kanyen'kehà:ka since time immemorial. I have

been an uninvited and grateful guest on the lands of the Coast Salish peoples

for 27 years. I have worked as a research project manager and researcher on

Michelle's university-based research team since 2017. I have a Master's of Arts

with a research focus on community engagement in the arts. I also have years

of administrative experience at Simon Fraser University, and am committed to

helping community-based researchers navigate university research spaces (not

just physically—in a whole person way) and fostering a sense of belonging in

academic spaces.

Marcia Mejia-Blanco

My name is Marcia Mejia-Blanco and I am Indigenous to the Nahua-Pipil people in

Central America, with family ties to the Nlaka'pamux people of Lytton First Nation

through my son. I was raised on the unceded territories of the Kwantlen, q̓ic̓əy̓,

Qayqayt, kʷikʷəƛ̓əm, sc̓əwaθən məsteyəxʷ, and Semiahmoo whereI am also raising

my son.

Michelle Pidgeon

My name is Michelle Pidgeon, and I'm of Mi'kmaq ancestry from Newfoundland

and Labrador, and I'm honoured to be living on the uncededed territories of the

Coast Salish Peoples since 2002, when I moved to BC for doctoral studies at

UBC and continuing as a faculty member in the Faculty of Education, Simon

Fraser University since 2008. My research passion has always been guided by

the desire to make systemic changes in post-secondary education, which

supports Indigenous peoples' visions of success for themselves using

Indigenous research methodologies and ethical protocols. My work over my

career spans the areas of Indigenous education, higher education,

community-based research, educational leadership, and student affairs and

services.

Appendix 2

Youth Engagement Session Notes

Skookum Youth

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN SURREY

Strong.
Powerful.
Brave.

Background:
Skookum Surrey hosted four Youth Night sessions in February 2023 at Kwantlen Park Secondary School in the Foods Room. Twenty youths aged 13-18 made beaded converse and participated in making a Starblanket to inform research and develop recommendations that will:
- Support the distinct needs of Indigenous youth at-risk living in Surrey for implementation through the Surrey Indigenous Youth Resiliency Program,
- Honor Indigenous protocols and Indigenous youth's lived experience,
- Identify the needs, challenges, and gaps faced by Indigenous youth in Surrey,
- Engage Indigenous youth in a meaningful way that connects them with culture.

Each Youth Night was centered around four different questions:
1. What are the programs/services/supports that are working well for Indigenous youth in Surrey.
2. What are the challenges that Indigenous youth in Surrey are facing? This can be at school, community or at home.
3. Are there safe spaces in Surrey for Indigenous youth? What makes it safe?
4. If you could wave your magic wand today and create change in Surrey, what would it be?

Overview of Youth responses:
Overwhelmingly, Indigenous youth said if they could create change right now they would increase housing supply for Indigenous people that have large homes, a gathering space that can accommodate a variety of programs, services and supports, as well as community and cultural connection and more Indigenous specific programs, services, supports, and opportunities in South Surrey. The youth who participated in the Youth Nights felt that Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association, the Indigenous Health Clinic, YMCA, Newton Youth Hub, Aboriginal Education (in high school), and Skookum Surrey were good organizations because they have cultural programs, services and supports that are helpful and useful for Indigenous youth. Specifically, they felt Indigenous art and language, and LGBTQ2S themes were supported by trusted adults and support workers. However, outside of these programs Indigenous youth experienced challenges and felt unsafe. The youth feel there is a lack of representation, inclusion and visibility for the diversity of Indigenous people on Turtle Island, as well as tokenization of Indigenous people. Furthermore, Indigenous youth felt unsafe because of stereotyping, discrimination, racism, hypersexualization and objectification, shame and secrecy around emotional and mental health, and hyper surveillance. For instance, Indigenous youth felt unsafe at the grocery stores or crossing the border because of hyper surveillance. Similarly, youth felt unsafe because of MMIWG, for example, some youth felt objectified when wearing regalia. The youth also said they would feel better if there were more recovery options for people exercising addiction and more housing for people experiencing homelessness. Youth also said they would feel safer if there was less pollution and less cars.

Other takeaways:
The youth are very passionate and community oriented. While the questions were based on youth experiences, the youth said they would feel safer and better based on holistic community wellness and safety. It should be noted that the youth are strong, resilient, and compassionate while advocating for themselves, their families and the wider urban Indigenous community.

Appendix 3

Youth Campfire Report

Skookum Youth

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN SURREY

Strong.
Powerful.
Brave.

INTRODUCTION

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) convened a Campfire engagement session to bring together the research conducted on Indigenous youth programming and the voices of Indigenous youth living in Surrey.

The Campfire is an engagement practice designed to bring people together in a way that incorporates Indigenous culture, community, and decolonizing methodologies. Decolonial and Indigenous methodologies are integral to ensuring the validity and ethicality of the data being collected when working with and for our Indigenous youth. Therefore, SUILC ensured that the Campfire employed Indigenous methods in order to centre Indigenous wisdom in the change-making process.

This report provides an overview of the day and a summary of what we heard from the youth. The youth voices are powerful, and this can be seen and felt throughout the recommendations captured in this report.

PROCESS

Cultural practices were deeply embedded in our gathering as we met in a circle around a metaphorical campfire. We started the day with a land acknowledgement and were formally welcomed by a member of Kwantlen First Nation. Following that, we practiced our introductions as a form of governance. We then empowered our youth to offer a prayer on the food and shared a meal together. The session started and closed with an exchange of gifts.

The day created space to support and develop our youth's advocacy skills in a gentle and accessible way. The facilitator gave special attention to lift up the youth and empower them in a safe space. Those who were not 'youth' were asked to witness the work and invited to contribute at select times throughout the day. The majority of the day was devoted to hearing from the youth.

This Campfire, facilitated by an Indigenous youth who was a member of the Skookum Guide Group and Skookum Ambassadors program, was both youth-led and youth-focused.[1] The success of the day was in itself a celebration of SUILC's work to support Indigenous youth. It demonstrated how youth can thrive when given the opportunity to learn leadership skills and connect with their Indigenous community and culture.

OUTCOMES

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[1] The Skookum Guide Group and Skookum Ambassadors program are run through Skookum Surrey, the engagement arm of SUILC. Further information can be found a https://surreyindigenousleadership.ca

Dreams

One of the exercises of the day was to ask the youth to share their dreams. They were asked– *if you could have anything you wanted in Surrey for Indigenous youth, what would it be?* The following exciting and innovative ideas were gathered:

- Create an Indigenous Youth Culture Exchange where we meet other Indigenous youth across Turtle Island.
- Have a shed of canoes for youth to use, maybe even ones we have carved together.
- Build a community longhouse with a local nation and celebrate together.
- Have a Support Centre for LGBTQ2S+ with access to health care, free gender affirming clothes, and support/therapy.
- Lower transit fares or free compass cards for Indigenous youth.
- Own our own entertainment space – community theater with playwright programs, acting, etc. This could turn into a space we could rent out to others for income which will feed back into youth programs.
- Create a program that would allow youth to travel to their home territories and foster reconnection with identity and family.
- Have an Urban Indigenous Recreation Centre, open 24/7, free, with an Urban Indigenous Basketball team that can compete in the First Nations Basketball League.

These dreams reflected some broader themes that would continue to come up in our youth's conversations.

Themes

The following are descriptions of the distinct set of themes that emerged from many of the conversations held throughout the first half of the day.

Place & Space - There is a strong need and desire for cultural gathering places that are trauma-informed, meet multiple basic needs, and are multi-purposed. Going beyond what is in the place, these spaces need to be held in a way that is able to address stigma and to support youth with compassion.

Capacity Building – There is a strong need and desire for youth programs to build further capacity for our youth. Four main areas of interest were expressed: education, employment, life skills, and other trainings.

Cultural Connection – Revitalizing culture is of high importance to Indigenous youth in Surrey. There is a specific interest in connecting with Elders and mentors, and practicing cultural activities with the greater urban Indigenous community.

Service & Roles – There is a need and desire to increase services, roles, and opportunities to support Indigenous youth in Surrey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When asked how to build better Indigenous youth programs in Surrey, the youth provided the following 14 recommendations.

Place and Space:

1. A physical place equipped to meet multiple needs, such as: showers, laundry, kitchen, food, computers, printers, phones, etc.
2. A physical space with multiple purposes, such as: a gym, kitchen, garden, art rooms, elder space, daycare, maybe even a carving space.
3. All spaces catered to Indigenous youth should be trauma-informed to address stigmas, and to serve youth with dignity and without judgement.
4. These spaces should be guided by shared values and community agreements to provide accountability in creating and keeping spaces safe.

Capacity Building:

5. Support for youth to develop skills to access post-secondary education and training, such as peer tutoring, providing support for youth to apply for scholarships or to post-secondary schools, and support to register for classes or other programs.
6. Support for youth to access employment opportunities, for example, entrepreneurship training, mock-interviews, FoodSafe, CPR and First Aid, and grant writing.
7. Life skill supports in programs, such as healthy relationships, sexual health, cooking, financial literacy/budgeting, and legal support/understanding.
8. Training opportunities and therapy/counsellor supports in these important areas: Naloxone/Narcan, resume building, navigating paperwork, and understanding education options.

Cultural Connection:

9. Programs should offer cultural activities, such as medicine workshops, regalia making, dancing, drumming circles, carving, art, language classes, and land-based activities.
10. Programs should offer access and connection to Elders, where Elders are constantly invited to our circles and activities, while also allowing space for Elders to rest and look after themselves.
11. Programs should allow for networking with the larger community, to practice visiting culture with one another.

Services & Roles:

12. Programs should connect further with partners and other service providers to create a community to ensure a culture of collective 'best practices' when supporting Indigenous youth.
13. Programs should consider creating an 'access coordinator' position, whose sole purpose is to find opportunities for youth and connect them.
14. A youth council is needed to further leadership skills and to ensure urban Indigenous youth are engaged with in matters that affect them.

Of the 14 recommendations, the youth identified the following five immediate priorities for Indigenous youth programs in Surrey:

1. A physical place equipped to meet multiple needs, such as: showers, laundry, kitchen, food, computers, printers, phones, etc.
2. Programs should offer cultural activities, such as: medicine workshops, regalia making, dancing, drumming circles, carving, art, language classes, and land-based activities.
3. Spaces should be trauma-informed to address stigmas, and to serve youth with dignity and without judgement.
4. A youth council is needed to further leadership skills and to ensure urban Indigenous youth are engaged with in matters that affect them.
5. Programs that provide educational support and skill-developments, including peer tutoring, support in applying for scholarships or to post-secondary, and support for registering for classes or other programs.

CONCLUSION

The Campfire was an experience that validated youth voices and left deep impressions on the non-youth that attended the day.

To conclude the day, there was a circle that gave everyone the opportunity to share their closing thoughts. Many shared how impressed they were with how intelligent, articulate, honest and courageous the youth were in sharing their insights throughout the day. An Elder at the session particularly commended the youth about how impressed she was by them. Further, many of the youth expressed feelings of gratitude for being heard, and feelings of validation.

Overall, the day was an example of how strong and capable our youth are, and what can be accomplished by empowering youth to be heard.

Our community is rising up. Our youth are capable and strong.