



Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

PROGRESS REPORT: FALL 2019



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Taanshi kiya'wow / Hello everyone

It is a great pleasure to present our 2019 progress report. As co-chairs, we work with an amazing coalition of organizations to be a collective voice for the more than 13,000 urban Indigenous people living in Surrey. For too long we have been invisible in Surrey—but no longer! Since 2015 we have worked hard to organize ourselves and amplify our voice. As you will see in this progress report, we have made great strides in just a short period.

In the last year alone we have:

- Launched the Skookum Project, a social innovation lab to reduce Indigenous child poverty in the city;
- Signed a partnership agreement with Simon Fraser University to increase Indigenous pathways to post-secondary education;
- Developed a detailed profile of Indigenous People in Surrey based on 2016 Census data;
- Welcomed Métis Family Services as a new member organization to our coalition;
- Collaborated with our partners to raise awareness through Orange Shirt Day, Louis Riel Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day and the Surrey Indigenous Film Series; and,
- Recognized Chief Marilyn Gabriel, Kevin Kelly and Michael Kelly Gabriel of Kwantlen First Nation plus the Surrey Aboriginal Group of Elders (SAGE) with Leadership Awards for supporting all of us trying to live an Indigenous life here in the city.

We are in a good place. We've done a lot of groundwork to get organized. We are clear on who we are and what we do. We have a multi-year commitment to core funding that we are leveraging to get stuff done. Now it's time to deepen our impact. In the years ahead, we hope to double-down on our communication and outreach efforts, deliver on our commitments to Skookum Lab and the SFU partnership, and keep searching for ways to bring new funding to Surrey so we can deliver on community priorities such as building an Indigenous gathering place.

The current Indigenous population in Surrey has exceeded that of Vancouver and will be nearly double the Vancouver Indigenous population by 2036!

So yes, there is still so much more to do. But it feels good. We have momentum, good people, and good projects. We encourage you to reach out to us if you share our vision and want to support the urban Indigenous community in Surrey.

Ki'nass kou'mitnowow/ Thank you very much.



Keenan McCarthy
Co-Chair



Joanne Mills
Co-Chair

Statement of Recognition

Our work takes place on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, including the Semiahmoo First Nation, the Kwantlen First Nation, the Katzie First Nation, the Kwikwetlem First Nation, the Qayqayt First Nation and the Tsawwassen First Nation. We recognize their connection to this land and acknowledge that we are newcomers to Surrey like everyone else.

Our group, the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee, does not represent these land-based First Nations, and we are careful not to speak on their behalf. Instead, we represent urban Indigenous people that have moved here from all over BC and in fact, from all over Canada to make Surrey their home. Our focus is on making Surrey a great place for Indigenous people living in the city, regardless of where they come from, their legal status, or their particular cultural heritage. As we do this, we endeavour to live in a good way with the land-based First Nations that have called this land their home since time immemorial.

SUILC Co-chairs



Keenan McCarthy, Co-Chair

Keenan McCarthy is the President of the Nova Métis Heritage Association. He actively participates in Métis organizations across the Greater Vancouver area and was previously a member of the North Fraser Métis board of directors. Keenan does all of this while studying Political Science and History at Simon Fraser University. He was recognized in 2019 by the Métis Nation of BC as an outstanding youth role model.



Joanne Mills, Co-Chair

Joanne is the Executive Director of the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association in Surrey and the treasurer of the BC Association of Friendship Centres. She has been a leader in health and social service agencies for over two decades. She has a passion for organizational transformation and change. Joanne is Cree from the Fisher River Cree Nation.

SUILC Trail-blazers

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee would like to thank all of the individuals who have stepped up to co-chair our committee since 2015. We acknowledge:

- Shelly Hill (past CEO, Kekinow Native Housing Society)
- Cassandra Dorgelo (past Youth Program Coordinator, Métis Nation of BC)
- Vera LeFranc (past Councillor, City of Surrey)

Left to right: Vera LeFranc, Shelly Hill, Cassandra Dorgelo.





Our Name & Logo

The formal name of the committee is the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee. The short-form name we use is SUILC: pronounced "swill-see." Gary George from Simon Fraser University Office for Aboriginal Peoples coined the term in 2017. Thanks, Gary!

Our logo includes the Coast Salish Sea Wolf designed by Brandon Gabriel of the Kwantlen First Nation, with the Metis Infinity symbol.

Background



Who We Are

SUILC is a coalition of organizations that have come together to advocate for the more than 13,000 Indigenous people living in Surrey.

Our membership includes all of the Indigenous organizations operating in Surrey, such as Métis Family Services, Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association, Nova Métis Heritage Association and Kekinow Native Housing. Other non-Indigenous organizations that have a significant connection to the Indigenous population, such as Fraser Health and the Surrey School District are also committee members.

All of the land-based First Nation governments with a historic and current connection to what is now the City of Surrey have a standing invitation to participate in all meetings of SUILC.

We are a diverse group. We believe it is one of our strengths.

Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS)

City of Surrey

Seven Sacred Fires Society

First Nations Health Authority

Fraser Health, Aboriginal Health

Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA)

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society (Xyolhemeylh)

Indigenous Wellness Training Society

Kekinow Native Housing Society

Métis Family Services

Métis Nation of British Columbia

Ministry of Children and Family Development Circle 5

Nova Métis Heritage Association

RCMP

Simon Fraser University

Surrey School District

How We Formed

We formed in 2015 as a project committee to develop an urban Indigenous social innovation strategy for Surrey. In 2017 we released the *All Our Relations: An Urban Indigenous Social Innovation Strategy*. Adopted by consensus in the spring of 2017, the *All Our Relations* report is our road map for creating the city we want to live in. The strategy coalesced SUILC and set us on the path to making Surrey a great place for Indigenous people. Shortly after that, Indigenous Services Canada—through the coalition stream of the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples—agreed to provide core funding to SUILC through to March 31, 2022.

2015

Formation of SUILC - September

2016

SUILC interim governance terms of reference adopted by consensus - January

Release of All Our Relations - Phase 1 report - May

SUILC and City of Surrey host first annual Orange Shirt Day - October

City of Surrey proclaims Louis Riel Day - November

2017

SUILC recognizes the first annual Indigenous Leadership Awards - April

Release of the All Our Relations Social Innovation Strategy - June

Surrey Council unanimously adopts United Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples - September

2018

SUILC secures five-year core funding agreement from Indigenous Services Canada - April

SUILC governance terms of reference adopted by consensus - June

Formation of the National Association of Urban Indigenous Coalitions

Launch of Skookum Lab - April

2019

Partnership Agreement with SFU - January

Our Relationship with the City of Surrey

The City of Surrey is a very important partner to SUILC. SUILC is not a legal entity, and so the City applies for and manages contracts and funding on our behalf. This arrangement lowers the administrative burden on our Committee members and allows us to focus on getting projects done for the benefit of the community. We have developed a solid working relationship with the City over the last four years, and we would like to see it continue and grow. We believe that the relationship we have with the City is one of our strengths.

Our Mandate

The *All Our Relations* report set out our collective vision and mission. It also describes our five strategic objectives. They are to:

- 1 Create and strengthen partnerships that will benefit urban Indigenous people in Surrey.**
- 2 Expand the urban Indigenous leadership capacity in Surrey.**
- 3 Improve and grow programs and services for urban Indigenous people in Surrey.**
- 4 Increase education and understanding about the urban Indigenous community in Surrey.**
- 5 Increase funding for urban Indigenous programs and services in Surrey.**

For each strategic objective, the *All Our Relations* report describes why it's necessary, sets out a number of goals in relation to the objective, and suggests strategies to achieve the goals.



Vision

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.

Mission

Our mission is to be a collective voice for urban Indigenous people in Surrey. We will advocate on behalf of all urban Indigenous people in Surrey and work collaboratively with other governments, organizations, and individuals that are committed to understanding and achieving our vision.

The Indigenous Population In Surrey



Back in 2015, there was no profile of Indigenous people in Surrey. No one knew how many Indigenous people lived in Surrey, and there wasn't any basic demographic information to support funding and service decisions. So one of the first steps we took as SUILC was to develop a profile of Indigenous people living in the city using data from the 2011 Census. What we found confirmed the suspicions of our members: Surrey was quickly becoming the largest urban Indigenous population in the province.

Recently we updated the profile to include statistics from the 2016 Census. Here are some key takeaways from the updated profile:

- The population is large.
- The population is diverse.
- The population is young.
- Some people are doing relatively well.
- Some people need more support.

The population is large

In 2016, 13,460 Indigenous people were living in Surreyⁱ. That same year, the Indigenous population in Vancouver and Surrey were almost equal. The significant difference is that between 2011 and 2016, the average annual growth rate in Surrey has been 4.9%, whereas it has only been 1.2% in Vancouver. Based on this growth rate, we are confident that Surrey is now the largest Indigenous community in BC.

What's more, based on these projections, Surrey's Indigenous population will nearly double Vancouver's Indigenous population within 16 years.

The Big Implication

- Decision-makers and funders need to use current population statistics and trends to make funding decisions.
- Investments we make now are going to pay off well into the future.
- Surrey needs more funding, more services, and more programs.

Indigenous Population Growth



The population is diverse

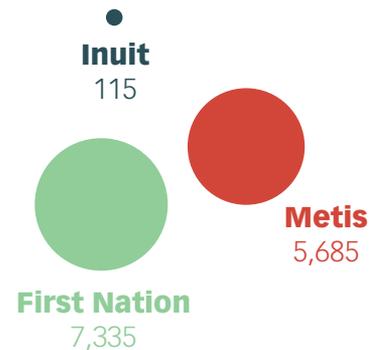
Fifty-five per cent of the Indigenous population in Surrey is First Nations. That 55% comes from all over BC and Canada, representing many different Nations, cultures, and languages.

Plus just over 40% of the Indigenous population are Métis. By far, the Métis are the largest cultural group represented in these numbers. And yet, the Métis are often battling for recognition and space.

Another factor when considering the diversity of Indigenous experiences in Surrey is to recognize that Indigenous people live in neighbourhoods throughout Surrey. North Surrey is home to many Indigenous Surrey residents...but so are Newton, Cloverdale, and South Surrey.



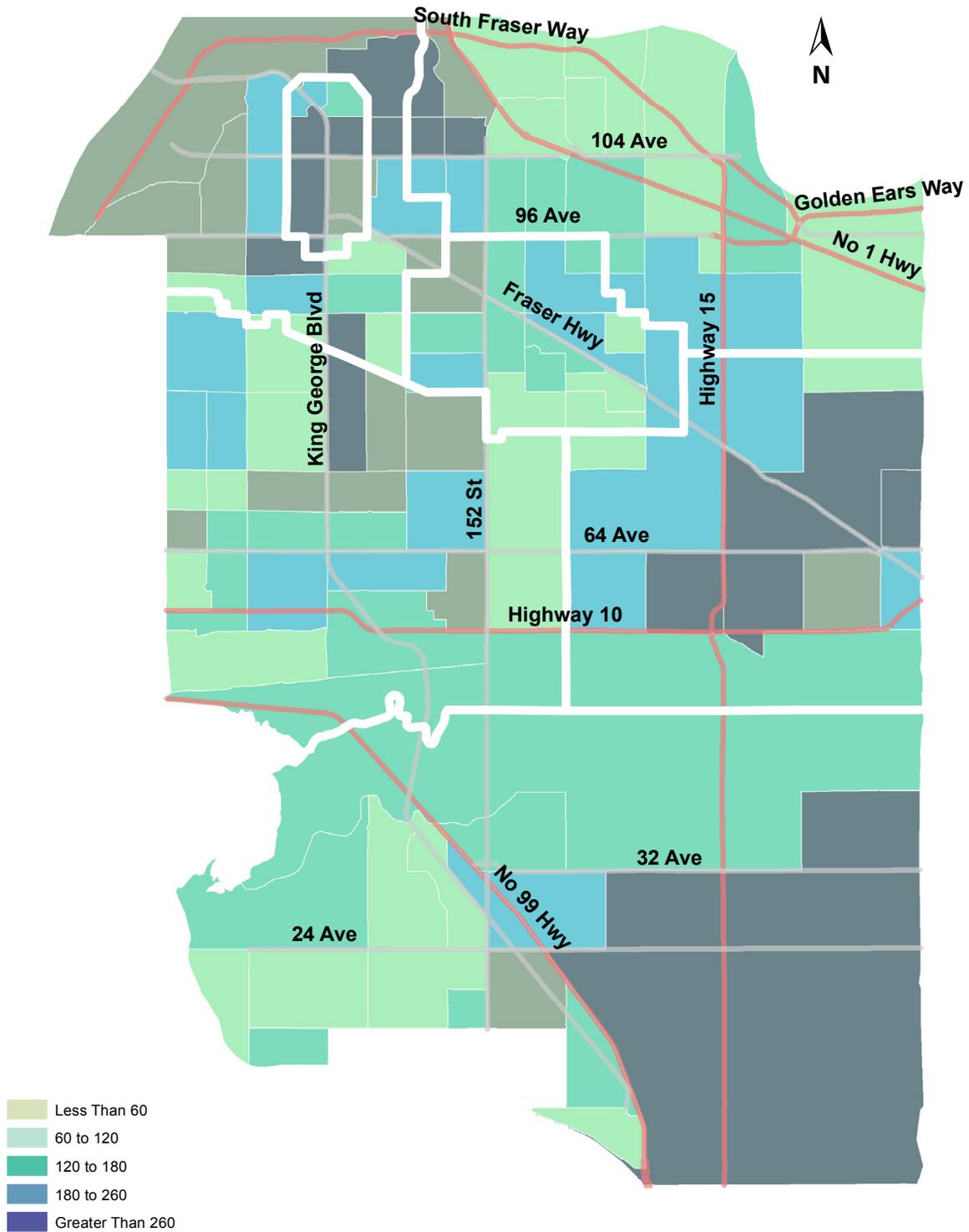
2016 Surrey Indigenous population by Aboriginal Identity

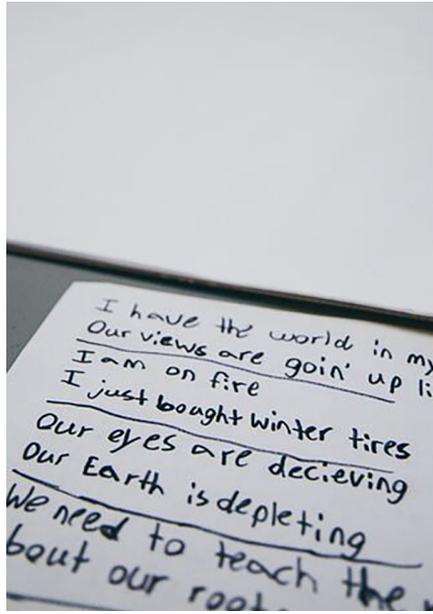


The Big Implication

- Services need to be geographically connected to where people live.
- Distinctions-based approaches (that recognize the uniqueness of First Nations and Métis people) should be considered to ensure that the design and delivery of services are appropriate.
- Not all Indigenous people in Surrey share the same culture, experiences or have the same needs. The design and delivery of programs and services for Indigenous people in Surrey needs to involve Indigenous people from Surrey!

Number of People with Aboriginal Identity, Surrey (2016)





The population is young

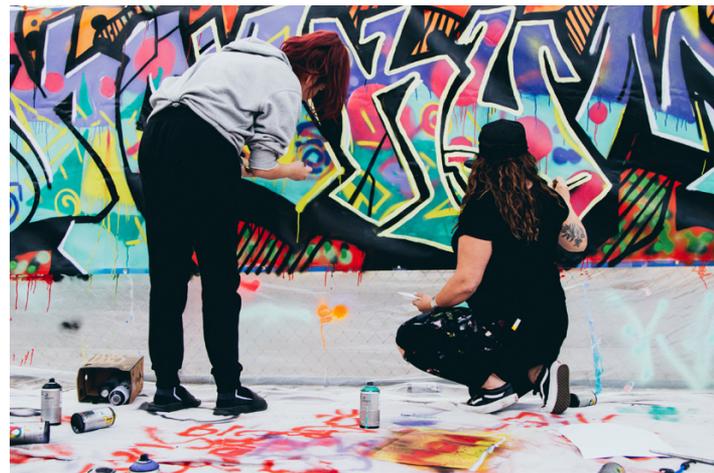
The median age of the Indigenous population in Surrey is 28 years old. This is different than in Vancouver, where the median age of Indigenous peoples is 33. In Surrey's total population, the median age is 38 years old, and in Vancouver, it is 39 years old.

Almost half (45%) of the population is younger than 24 years old. There are 3,655 Indigenous children living in Surrey (0 – 14 years).

The Big Implication

- Funding for programs and services directed to young children and families will have a significant return on investment.
- What is true about the Indigenous population in Vancouver is not necessarily true in Surrey.
- Surrey needs more funding, programs, and services to support young Indigenous children and families.

Significantly more young Indigenous families and children live in Surrey than in Vancouver.



Some people are doing relatively well

46% of Indigenous households in Surrey own their own homes.

47% of Indigenous people in Surrey have some type of post-secondary education.

Indigenous people in Surrey participate in the labour force at the same rate as non-Indigenous people.

Many Indigenous people have post-secondary education and are employed or seeking employment. These facts challenge some of the most persistent negative stereotypes about Indigenous people.

The Big Implication

- The Indigenous community is large, there's a lot of diversity, and we must not paint everyone with the same brush.
- Not all Indigenous people in the city need intensive services, but most are still seeking ways to connect and experience culture and sense of Indigenous community in the city.

Some people need more support

While we celebrate the success that some Indigenous people are having in Surrey, we also need to recognize that some people are very challenged to make a home and a life in Surrey. For example:

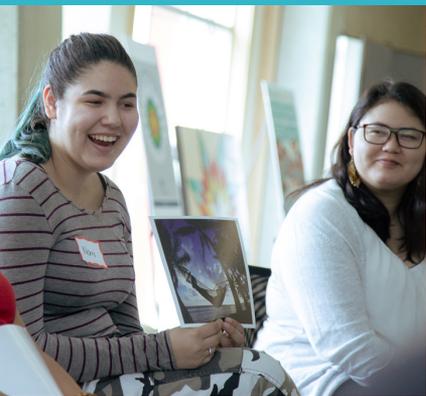
- 37% of Indigenous children and youth in Surrey live in poverty—that's 1,610 children and youth.
- 41% of Indigenous children in Surrey live with a single parent.
- 85% of Indigenous single parents in Surrey are women.
- More Indigenous women have low-income status despite having higher levels of employment.

The Big Implication

- Investments to support Indigenous people need to be more targeted and based on actual data.
- Addressing these statistics requires a fundamental shift in the systems that are perpetuating poverty.
- Indigenous women, young families, and children need more funding, programs and services.

For additional information on a wide range of socio-economic indicators, please see the *2016 Profile of the Indigenous Population in Surrey*.

Progress On *All Our Relations*



Currently, the SUILC meets as a “committee of the whole” approximately every two months and hosts a strategic planning retreat once a year in the city. There are also five active Working Groups that meet as needed:

- Protocols & Strategic Relationships
- Leadership Capacity
- Indigenous Gathering Space
- Awareness Building & Communication
- Indigenous Child Poverty Reduction

SUILC and the Working Groups share the lead on advancing specific objectives and goals of the *All Our Relations* report. Looking at progress in achieving the goals of the *All Our Relations* report we see that as of August 2019:

- 25% are completeⁱⁱ
- 38% are in-progress or pendingⁱⁱⁱ
- 37% have no activity^{iv}

Some of the more significant developments are described in the following pages.

SFU Relationship Agreement

In January 2019, we signed an important agreement with Simon Fraser University (SFU) President and Vice-Chancellor Andrew Petter. SFU is the second-largest university in the province with campuses in BC’s three largest cities: Vancouver, Burnaby, and Surrey. SFU is making significant infrastructure investments in Surrey, and this agreement ensures that urban Indigenous voices are well represented as the university expands its presence in the city. As Steve Dooley, Executive Director of SFU Surrey, said, “This signing marks a significant milestone in the ongoing SFU-SUILC relationship, and will help to shape and inform the paths we travel together in support of the region’s Indigenous communities.”

(SFU) President and Vice-Chancellor Andrew Petter and SUILC Co-chair Keenan McCarthy.

SUILC | SFU COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

Top Three Priorities

1

To support and increase the number of Indigenous students from Surrey participating in programs and courses at SFU;

2

To co-create academic and research initiatives that engage and benefit the urban Indigenous community in Surrey; and,

3

To promote the needs, interests and opportunities to work with urban Indigenous peoples in Surrey.



Creating awareness of urban Indigenous experiences in Surrey

Few people recognize that Indigenous people live in Surrey. In public consciousness, Indigenous people are still largely invisible. As a result, SUILC continues to be engaged in activities that raise awareness and understanding of the diversity of urban Indigenous experiences in Surrey.

We have led or contributed to annual events like:

- Louis Riel Day
- Orange Shirt Day
- National Indigenous Peoples' Day

We have engaged with political leaders:

- Tea & Bannock with Surrey Mayor and Council
- Tea & Bannock with Federal candidates

We have engaged the community in recognition and dialogue:

- Indigenous film series with Surrey Libraries
- Dialogue on racism
- Annual leadership awards
- Indigenous authors with Surrey Libraries



Leadership Award recipients Kevin Kelly and Chief Marilyn Gabriel.



Orange Shirt Day.



Finally, as part of our commitment to creating awareness and understanding, we have encouraged individuals and agencies in Surrey to use SUILC as a first-point-of-contact for advice and guidance on engaging the urban Indigenous community. Last year, we had 10 delegations make formal presentations to SUILC on significant matters like infrastructure investments or planned social service changes that could affect the urban Indigenous community.

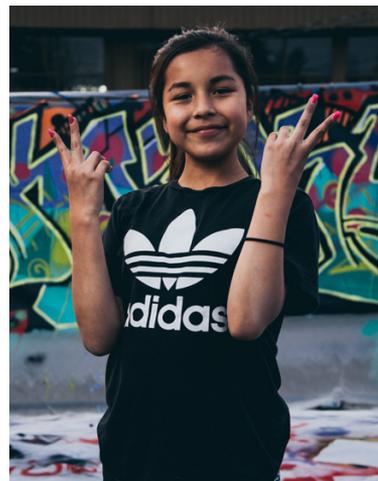
Recent Surrey-based media coverage:

Surrey's Indigenous Leadership Committee Celebrates Three Years, Cloverdale Report, August 2, 2018

A day for orange shirts at Surrey City Hall to 'remember the injustices of the past', Surrey Now-Leader, September 26, 2019

New Partnership at SFU supports urban Indigenous peoples in Surrey, Peace Arch News, January 17, 2019

Awards recognize urban Indigenous advocates in Surrey, Surrey Now-Leader, September 28, 2019



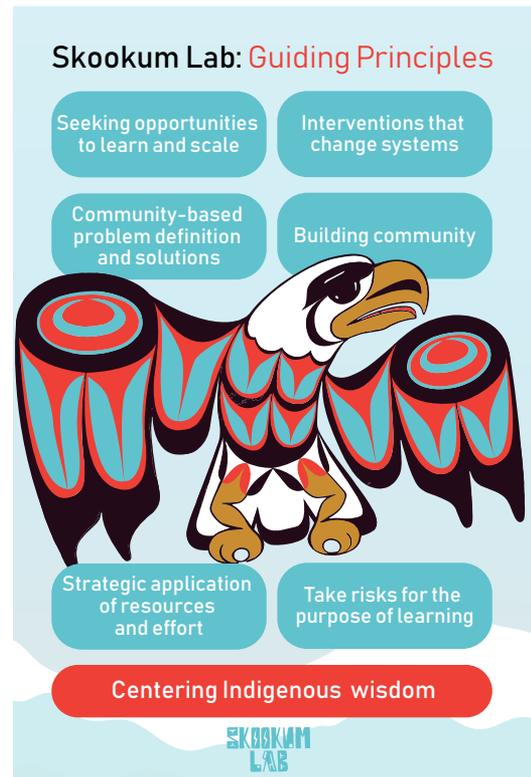
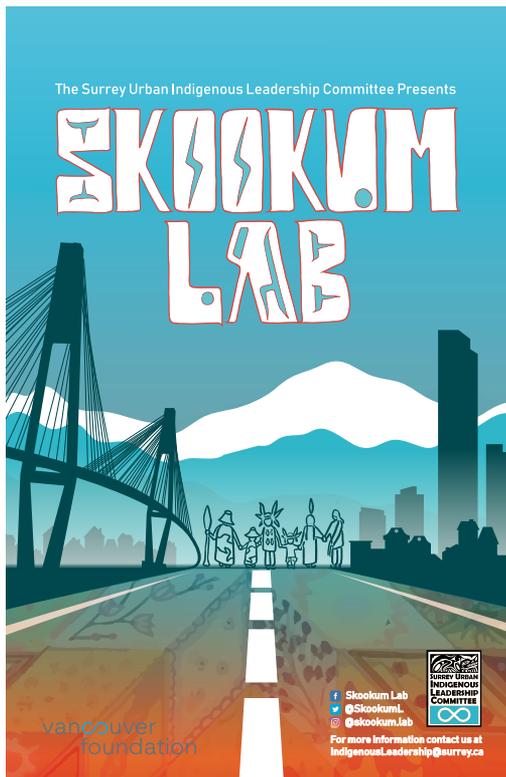
Reducing urban Indigenous child poverty through the Skookum Lab

Thirty-seven per cent of Indigenous children in Surrey live in poverty. This is unacceptable. In response, we have developed a three-year social innovation project called Surrey Skookum Lab. Skookum means strong, powerful, and brave. With the support of strong leadership, powerful methodologies, and a brave community, Skookum Lab is developing new ways to address Indigenous child and youth poverty in Surrey, BC. We chose a social innovation lab approach because our goal is to disrupt the systems that perpetuate Indigenous child poverty. Skookum is one of the first Indigenous social innovation labs in the country.

Over the past year, we have connected with over 1,000 Indigenous individuals, families, service providers and decision-makers

within systems that impact Indigenous child poverty. As we have done the engagement, we have also committed to investing in the community. As a result, we have been able to utilize 55 community members as advisors, facilitators, or ambassadors of the Skookum Lab and are seeking creative ways to strengthen the leadership capacity of the community.

This year, we will design and test new prototypes to disrupt the system. In addition to the lab, we continue to seek ways to bring the urgency of urban Indigenous child poverty to the attention of decision-makers.



SKOOKUM LAB

Ecosystem



Leveraging funding for Indigenous-led initiatives

Indigenous Services Canada has committed to funding core SUILC activities through to March 31, 2022. While it is not enough money to fully implement the *All Our Relations* strategy, we have been able to leverage these funds and secure additional funding from:

Vancouver Foundation

City of Surrey

Heritage Canada

Simon Fraser University

VanCity Community Foundation

Mitacs

This amounts to a doubling of the initial investment by Indigenous Services Canada. With the additional funding, we have been able to forge ahead with specific projects that align with the *All Our Relations* strategy.

Furthermore, our member organizations have tracked new investments into Surrey for Indigenous-led programs and services. They report that funding levels have increased by about 15 to 20% since 2015. While we don't take direct credit for these investments, our member organizations report that, indirectly, SUILC is making a compelling case for the unique needs of the urban Indigenous population in Surrey.

Looking Ahead



We feel that we have had some success, yet there is still so much more to do. In the years ahead, we are committed to:

Building community connections

We want to amplify our voice. That means doubling-down on our communications and community engagement by expanding our reach through traditional and social media.

Fully implement the partnership agreement with SFU

Signing the partnership agreement with SFU was a significant milestone. Now we have to demonstrate that the words on the page are meaningful and will result in positive changes for the urban Indigenous population in Surrey.

Decreasing Indigenous child poverty

We are designing and implementing prototypes that center Indigenous wisdom. To be successful we will be seeking greater investments from partner organizations that share our goals and approaches to change. We plan on showing that Indigenous designed interventions can work and can also be scaled up for positive impact across our community.

Using our community connections and engagement experience to address urban Indigenous priorities

The expertise and capacity we have developed in the community for social innovation can be applied to other priority areas like increasing public safety, eliminating racism, and finding affordable housing solutions. We've built the infrastructure for change and we intend to use it.

Increasing the visibility of Indigenous people in the city

We will continue to raise awareness and understanding. For us, that includes finding a path forward that will lead to the development of a gathering place or hub for Indigenous cultural activities, social events and services.

Advocating for better services and increased funding

Funding for Indigenous services in the city is increasing yet it still isn't where it needs to be. We need to get decision-makers to acknowledge that Surrey has the largest urban Indigenous population in BC that will grow to nearly double that of Vancouver's Indigenous population within the next 16 years.

Deepening our impact

Finally, we know that we need to demonstrate impact and value to our funders. For that reason, we have contracted Reciprocal Consulting—an Indigenous owned and operated consulting firm specializing in program evaluation—to complete our five-year evaluation of SUILC. We are committed to using the evaluation as an opportunity to learn, expand our reach, and deepen our impact.

All Our Relations.

We are especially grateful for the support of our major funders:



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

vancouver
foundation

Vancity
Community Foundation

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[†] Indigenous is self-identified and includes First Nation, Métis, or Inuit.

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[‡] An example of COMPLETE is to “formalize the SUILC coalition” by adopting a terms of reference to provide governance structure to SUILC operations, which was completed in January 2018.

[‡] An example of IN-PROGRESS is goal #29 to “increase the awareness of programs and services available to Indigenous families in Surrey” by creating a website and other social media channels for connecting with the urban Indigenous community. We expect this goal to be completed in early in 2020.

[‡] An example of NO ACTIVITY is goal #33 to “create new Indigenous organizations or Indigenous led partnerships to address service gaps.” Most of our partners are struggling to deliver their own programs given the enormous demand and chronic funding shortages in Surrey. As a result, we aren’t sure how to best tackle this particular strategy.

All Our Relations.

