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URBAN INDIGENOUS MOTHERS AS SYSTEMS NAVIGATORS.

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

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MOTHERS MATTER CENTRE 2021 RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE LAND

The work of the Navigation Project by Mothers Matter Centre (MMC) takes place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded land of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

Find out more about Indigenous territories and languages at https://native-land.ca/

"AMY AND TESSA": A STORY ABOUT DATA-COLLECTION FORMS AND WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.
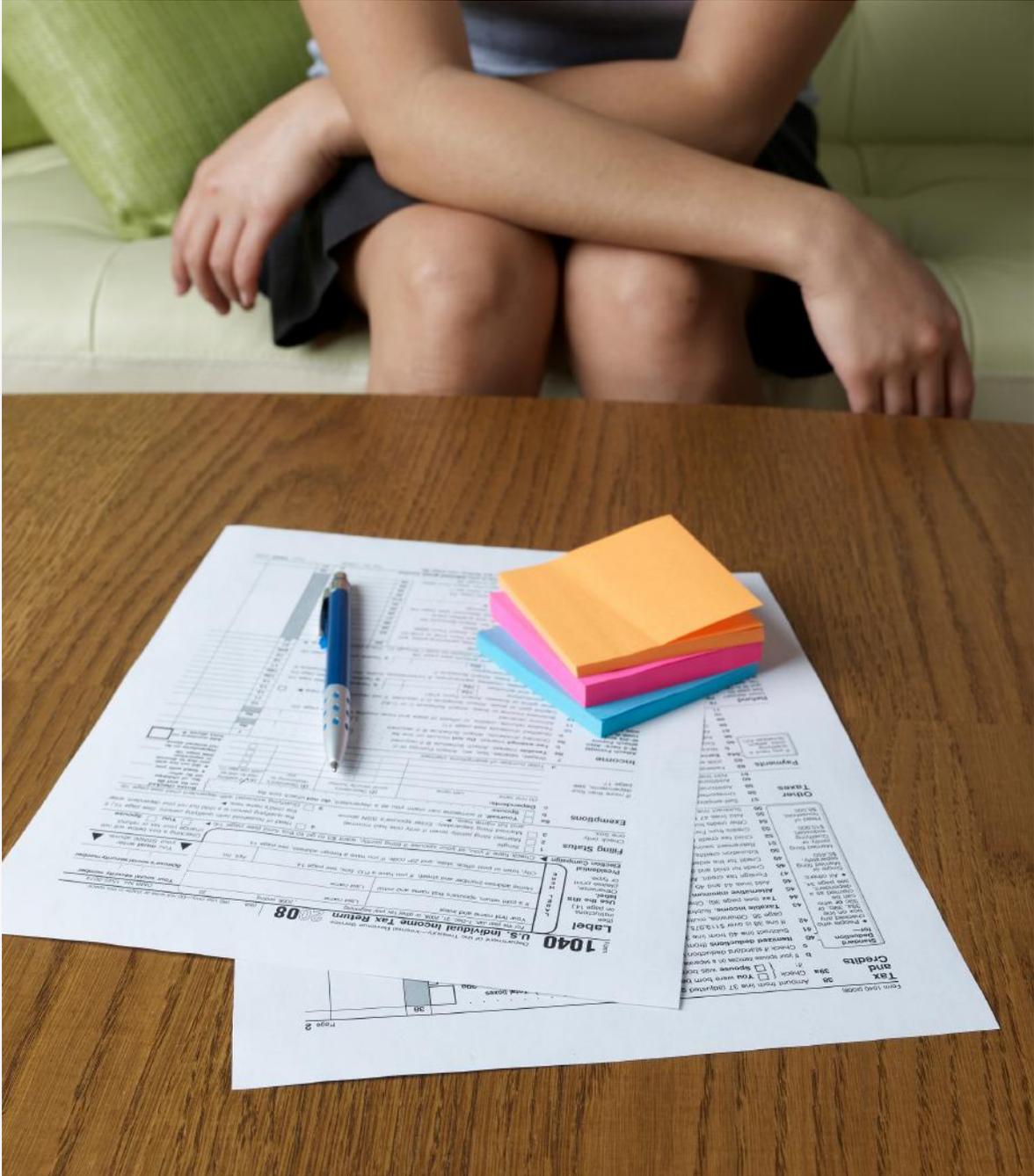
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Multi-year project (2018-2021). led by Mothers Matter Centre in collaboration with the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society.

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Contributes research and social policy analysis in support of the pilot expansion of the Indigenous HIPPY Program in East Vancouver.

Conceptual Framework:

- Participatory Action Research (PAR);
- Systems Thinking;
- Theory of Change by HIPPY;
- Decolonizing methodologies;
- Principles of Reconciliation & Calls to Action (TRC, 2016);
- PAR guided by "5Rs" values.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Create space for culturally safe and meaningful dialogue with urban Indigenous mothers of young children working and living in low-income households in East Vancouver.
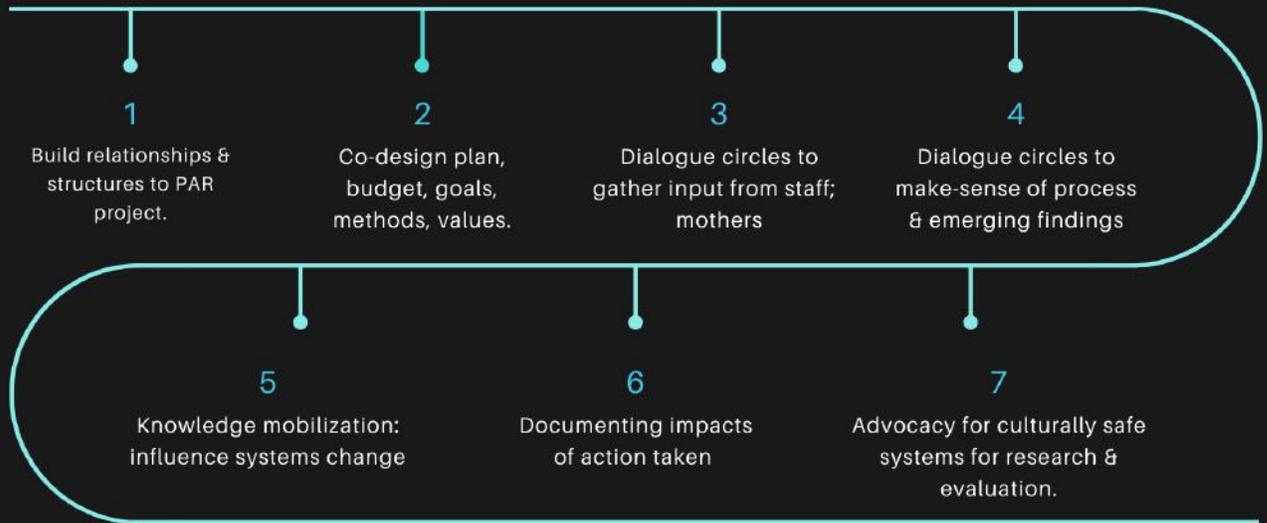
Address systemic barriers participants encounter to overcome social isolation and loneliness.

Use Participatory Action Research approaches to support the delivery and sustainability of the pilot expansion of the Indigenous HIPPY program in East Vancouver.
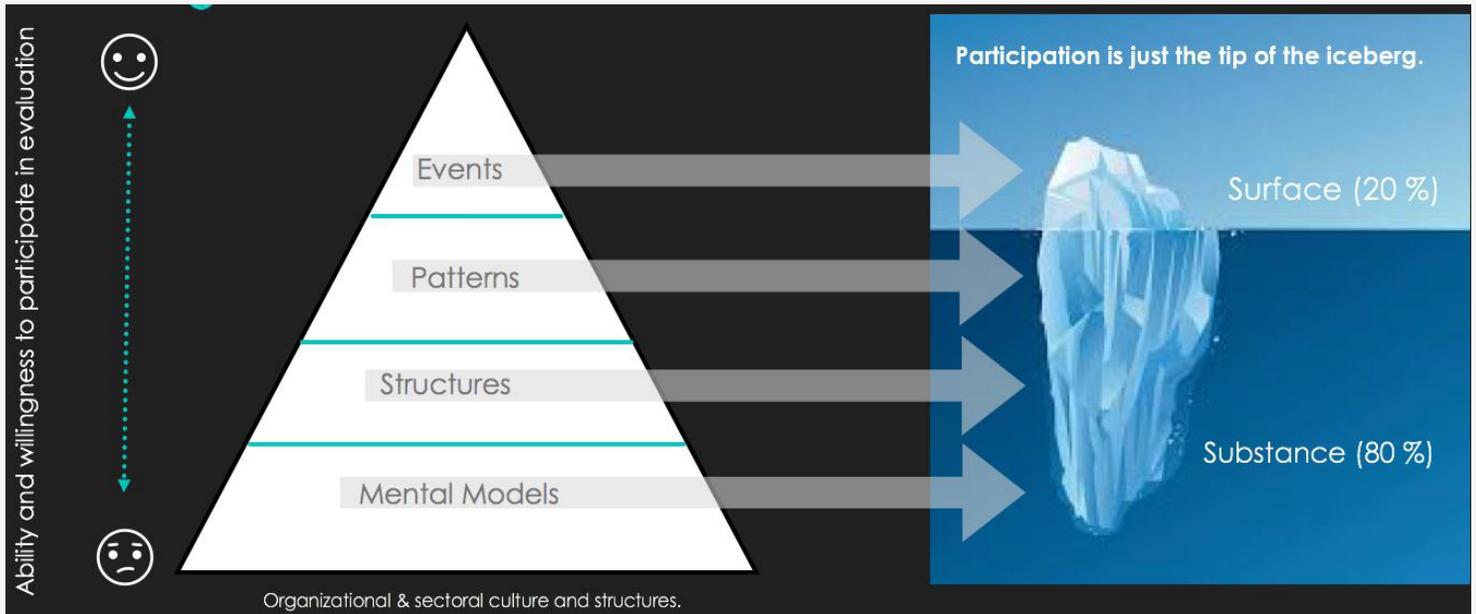
Urban Indigenous Mothers as Systems Navigators

Navigation map. Iterative process.

1 Build relationships & structures to PAR project.

2 Co-design plan, budget, goals, methods, values.

3 Dialogue circles to gather input from staff; mothers

4 Dialogue circles to make-sense of process & emerging findings

5 Knowledge mobilization: influence systems change

6 Documenting impacts of action taken

7 Advocacy for culturally safe systems for research & evaluation.

PROJECT ROADMAP

THE PROBLEM: PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS IN THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES.

CREATING SAFE AND RELEVANT SPACE FOR PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE PROJECT

5 Rs value-based approach:

Respect
Relevance
Reciprocity
Responsibility
Relations

Cf. Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991);
Tessaro & Restoulo (2018).
5Rs image by Angela M. Contreras (2019).

IMPACTS OF SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LONELINESS.

CASE STUDY: THE PILOT EXPANSION OF THE INDIGENOUS HIPPY PROGRAM IN EAST VANCOUVER.

DURING CIRCLES OF DIALOGUE WITH THE INDIGENOUS HIPPY HOME VISITORS WE LOOKED AT STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF PROGRAM STAFF TO PARTICIPATE INTHE STUDY.

Strengths and enablers:
- Paid employment and training for Indigenous mothers of young children from the community;
- Paid-time dedicated to directly working with the mothers, time to build a relationship of trust and mutual support with HIPPY mothers;
- Time for weekly training on HIPPY curriculum;
- 2-3 years of employment helps HVs thrive as life-long learners and community leaders.

Limitations or barriers
- HVs hired in part-time basis, 2-3 years term;
- Participation in research and evaluation; professional development takes (paid) time away;
- from home-visits and training on HIPPY curriculum;
- Plan and budgets out of synch with uniqueness of home-visiting in East Vancouver (e.g., time consumed while travelling by public transit, outreach, and recruiting participants are not budgeted for).

IMPACTS OF SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LONELINESS.

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- Dialogue circles with the Indigenous HIPPY Home Visitors taught us about the importance and need to engage the program staff and the HIPPY mothers at co-designing the Navigation Study.

- Formal structures for the participation of the Home Visitors in the Navigation project were created.

- Creating and sustaining formal structures for Indigenous HIPPY Home Visitors to participate in research and evaluation beyond the Navigation will require changes in the systems used for program design, monitoring and evaluation.

Participation is a complex problem:
- Mothering young children of Indigenous ancestry while working and living in East Vancouver;
- Urban Indigeneity, social policies and systems that contributes to isolation and loneliness;
- Frontline community support is essential work but precarious employment;
- Moral, ethical, health, and legal aspects of data collection, and use of data and evidence on Indigenous communities.

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Always focus on what makes the strengths of the program!
- Wealth of testimonies and stories from past participants in Indigenous HIPPY;
- Indigenous HIPPY Home Visitors have lived experience of mothering young children of
- Indigenous ancestry while working and living in East Vancouver;
- HIPPY(MMC) delivers) training and professional development which can be made culturally safe and relevant;
- The role of Home Visitors as leaders in the community.

IMPACTS OF SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LONELINESS.

CASE STUDY: THE PILOT EXPANSION OF THE INDIGENOUS HIPPY PROGRAM IN EAST VANCOUVER.

WHAT AND HOW CAN WE INFLUENCE SYSTEM CHANGE?

Events:
Participation of Indigenous HIPPY Programs in program design, research and evaluation.

Patterns:
Programs and research design don't budget adequate time for Home Visitors to "deep-dive" into dialogue and systems thinking.

Structures:
Budgets, Job descriptions, License agreements, MOUs, funding systems, … Home Visitor as precarious employment.

Mental modes:
self-exclusion, tokenism, research and evaluation bias towards "external," "objectivity", "expertise", "leadership".

IMPACTS OF SYSTEMIC EXCLUSION: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND LONELINESS.

In sum:

If the structure does not permit dialogue, the structure must be changed.
~ Paulo Freire.

Thank You!

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS & PARTNERS

WITH GRATITUDE TO THE AWESOME PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS BEHIND THIS PROJECT

The Staff of the pilot Indigenous HIPPY Program at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS).

The community of 45 urban Indigenous
mothers enrolled in the pilot Indigenous
HIPPY Program in East Vancouver.

Elder Matriarch Glida Morgan (Tla'amin) for her guidance and support.

Partner organizations:
Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House; Mount Pleasant; Neighbourhood House; Helping Spirit Lodge Society, UBC First Nations & Indigenous Studies; the UBC Centre for Community Engagement & Learning.

VANCOUVER FOUNDATION
SYSTEMS GRANT

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
COMMUNITY -BASED PARTNERSHIP GRANT

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (CFO)
HEALING & RECONCILIATION GRANT

CITY OF VANCOUVER
SOCIAL POLICY GRANT

MORE INFORMATION

URBAN INDIGENOUS MOTHERS AS SYSTEMS NAVIGATORS.

THE NAVIGATION PROJECT.

A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT BY MOTHERS MATTER CENTRE (2018-2021).

Project webpage:
https://www.mothersmattercentre.ca/hippy-navigation

Indigenous HIPPY in Canada
https://www.mothersmattercentre.ca/aboriginal-hippy/

Video overview of first year of the project:
https://youtu.be/tcLWYlVvSGM

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