

2022 POLICY BRIEF SUMMARIES



The LEVEL Youth Policy Program takes place on the traditional and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəjəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & sə́ilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Coast Salish peoples.

GRAPHIC DESIGN
And Also Too

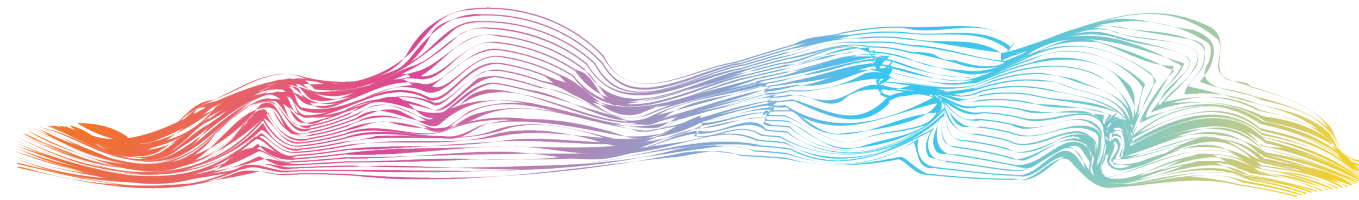
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"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized, I am somebody."

—<https://www.youthdoit.org/themes/advocacy/>



About the LEVEL Initiative

LEVEL is a youth engagement initiative of Vancouver Foundation that aims to address racial inequity. We do this by investing in the leadership capacity of Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, and refugee youth to create more opportunities throughout the non-profit and charitable sector.

Despite being the fastest-growing youth populations in British Columbia, Indigenous, immigrant, and refugee youth don't have the same opportunities as other young people. Race continues to be a factor that hinders their ability to have a say in decisions that impact their lives.

LEVEL empowers these youth by building their capacity to challenge and change those systems that hinder their ability to build a more just world.

LEVEL consists of three pillars of work to advance racial equity

1. LEVEL Youth Policy Program
2. LEVEL Youth Organizing
3. LEVEL BIPOC Granting

About the LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP)

The LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP) brings together young people between the ages of 19 and 29 from across British Columbia who identify as being Indigenous or racialized immigrants or refugees. Indigenous and racialized Newcomer youth are disproportionately impacted by certain public policies but are rarely included in the development and implementation of public policy process. The LEVEL YPP aims to provide these youth with

equitable training and leadership opportunities to better navigate the public policy landscape, and to develop new tools and skills to influence, shape, and advocate for policy changes that are relevant in their own communities. Having young people directly involved in shaping policies that impact their lives is essential to creating systemic, meaningful change. The LEVEL YPP's training is grounded from and within Indigenous peoples' worldviews, which the program acknowledges, could vary from person-to-person or nation-to-nation. Indigenous worldviews place a large emphasis on connections to the land. This perspective views the land as sacred; where everything and everyone is related and connected; where the quality of the relationships formed are key in life; where what matters is the success and well-being of the community, and where there can be many truths as they are based on individual lived experiences.¹ As such, an important premise of this training is to centre and place a particular focus on the fact that the work that has gone into developing this training, as well as the training itself, has taken and will take place on unceded (never given away/stolen) territories of the hən̓q̓'əmin 'əḿ̓-speaking Musqueam peoples, of the Halkomelem-speaking Tsleil-Waututh peoples, and of the sn̓íchim-speaking Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.



“I think this program specifically tends to disrupt who gets to see themselves as policy makers and how we can get young people empowered enough, knowledgeable enough, with enough tools, resources and support to be in those spaces.”

—Youth Policy Program
Past Participant

Fernanda Díaz-Osorio

EATING BEYOND LABELS: FOOD WASTE REDUCTION, BUT NOT AS A FOOD SECURITY SOLUTION



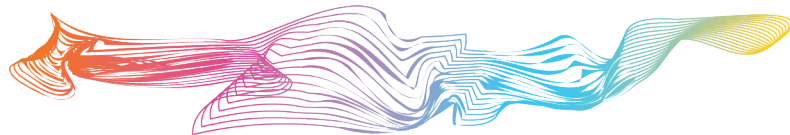
I am an uninvited guest on Coast Salish lands where I moved from my dear city of Oaxaca, Mexico. I graduated from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. I laugh loud and often, especially when surrounded by passionate friends who want to change the world. I dream of increasing educational opportunities for LatinX children and hope never to lose my curiosity. I love complex questions, trying new things, and despite growing up in the city, I have fun getting my hands dirty (with soil)! I enjoy meeting strangers and am a small-talk fan. I start every day with a cup of coffee and write everything on my google calendars. I de-stress by running along False Creek, and I am grateful to the urban planners who decided to build so many tennis courts in Vancouver!

The LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP) guided me to explore the potential of policy in Canada. My policy brief is the interaction between my experiences growing up in Mexico, moving to Canada, and my hopes for the future.

I hope this report encourages people to reflect on and value their lived experiences. Please get in touch if you agree (or disagree) about the issues mentioned here, or if you just want to chat about common interests.

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Objectives

The objectives of this policy brief are:

- To inform the public about food loss and waste in Canada and its impacts.
- To document the relationship between food waste and food insecurity.
- To assess current laws and initiatives tackling food waste.
- To propose ways to decrease food waste in Canada.

Executive Summary

Food loss and waste (FLW) has environmental, economic, and social impacts. Valuable resources are wasted every time food is sent to the compost or landfill. Food is wasted across the entire supply chain.

In Canada, most of the FLW happens at the consumer level (retail and household). A big part of food waste at the consumer level can be avoided. In order to mitigate the environmental impact of FLW, we should strive to reduce it, especially at the source level.

Reducing FLW is not a solution to food insecurity. Food insecurity in Canada is an income issue. People are going hungry because they cannot afford food, not because there is not enough food for them to eat.

Canada committed in 2015 to halve food waste by 2030. In its efforts to accomplish its goal, Canada has implemented various strategies. Among the strategies, encouragement to donate food (tax incentives, liability protection, and safety requirements) and a food waste innovation challenge have been implemented. In order to accomplish the goal by 2030, systemic change has to happen. Policy regulation can play a key role in reducing food waste.

Food label regulations in Canada are confusing for consumers. The misleading labels result

in unnecessary food waste in Canada, as most consumers do not understand the difference between expiry dates and best before dates. Food is safe to eat beyond its best before date, and it is not illegal to sell it.

To reduce FLW in Canada, a food label regulation change should happen. The regulation should force companies to provide clearer explanations to consumers regarding the meaning of the date included on the package (their relationship with freshness and food safety) as well as proper storage indications for all packaged products.

In conclusion, having regulations that create clear food-date labels will reduce food waste at the household level in Canadian households.



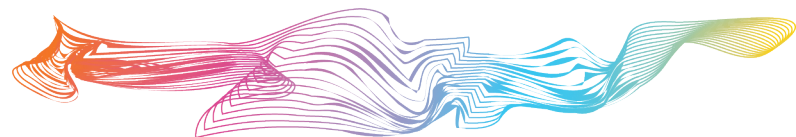
ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph

Jenna Duncan

RESPECTFUL INCORPORATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN FISH AND FISH HABITAT DECISION-MAKING



Jenna is of mixed Indigenous and Scottish ancestry and is a member of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and part of the Crow clan. She was born and raised in the traditional territory of her people in Whitehorse, Yukon, and now resides in the unceded x̣ṃəθkwəỵəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səl̓ílwəṭ territories. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Biology in the spring of 2020 at Simon Fraser University and is currently a Project Manager at the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC where she supports the collaboration between First Nations to advance collective interests in the restoration and protection of fish and aquatic ecosystems. In her spare time, Jenna enjoys hiking, fishing, curling, and making traditional regalia like moccasins, mukluks and mittens. Jenna is passionate about the environment and has always been an advocate for the protection of the land, water and wildlife across Canada and around the globe.



Executive Summary

With the downward trends we are seeing with wild Pacific salmon, if we continue with modern salmon governance and conservation practices used today, there is a possibility that the species could go extinct in the near future.

This would be detrimental to ecological systems and communities alike, due to wild Pacific salmon being both an ecological and cultural keystone species (Reid, et al., 2022). Indigenous fish and resource management differs greatly from the colonial fishing practices and management that exist today. Colonial systems focus mainly on the extraction of resources for short-term benefits, whereas Indigenous peoples focus on managing resources in a way that ensures there is enough for multiple generations (Atlas, et. al. 2021). It is extremely important to include both Indigenous knowledge and Western science in the protection of salmon, fish, and fish habitat. Each perspective has great strengths, with no one knowledge system being able to tell us everything we need to know about the species to ensure its revival and survival for future generations.

In 2019, Canada introduced the modernized Fisheries Act and Bill C-68, which states that “provided Indigenous knowledge must inform habitat decisions,” and that Indigenous knowledge will be protected when provided in-confidence to the Minister (Government of Canada, 2021). The Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) was created to implement the Fisheries Act provisions from Bill C-68. Indigenous knowledge is sacred to Indigenous communities and it is of the utmost importance that there is a respectful relationship during this process, and that communities are meaningfully involved in all stages of the

collection, storage, and usage of this information. Indigenous people need to be part of the decision-making process to ensure Indigenous knowledge is appropriately analyzed and interpreted (FNFC, 2019).

In order to conserve wild Pacific salmon and other important fish species, I recommend starting with a process or policy within the FFHPP that is already working to ensure the provided Indigenous knowledge is included in decision-making. The FFHPP should develop regional, First Nation-led advisory panels to gather, hold, and inform how Indigenous knowledge should be interpreted and applied during fish and fish habitat decision-making. There are over 600 Indigenous groups in Canada with over 200 of those residing in British Columbia (BC), and all of those groups/communities have their own Indigenous knowledge practices and protocols. This makes it important to have regional groups to interpret and advise on how to include Indigenous knowledge. For any decision-making of broad concern, there could be a national advisory panel that elicits advice from the various regional panels.

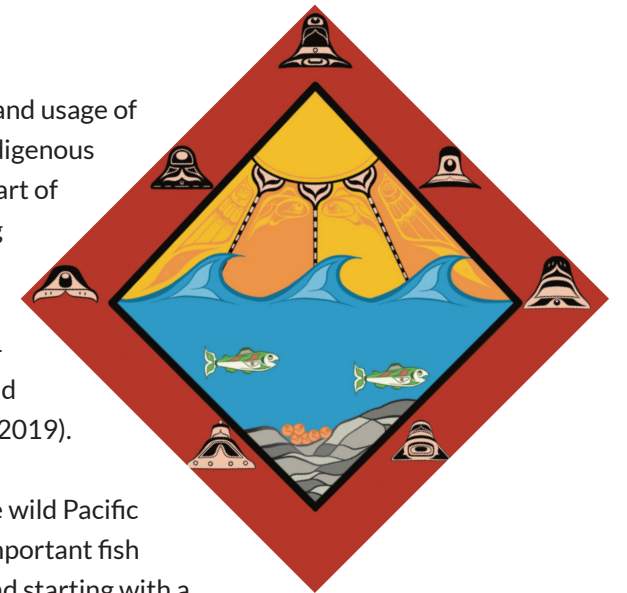


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Jessica Joseph

Kimbaya Carriere

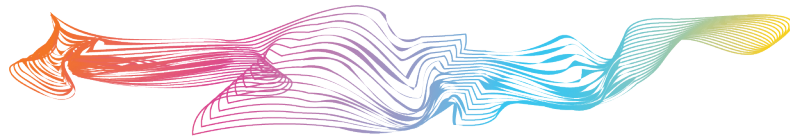
A PATHWAY TO DEVELOP A COLLECTIVE, PROVINCIAL BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS WATER DECLARATION



Kimbaya Carriere is a versatile Franco-Metis and Mexican-Mestiza Project Coordinator with a background in successfully executing water projects. She is originally from Treaty 1, traditionally known in Cree as win-nipi, ᐃᓄᓂᐃ (murky waters), now referred to as Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is from the heart of Manitoba's French community, located at the confluence of the Red River and the Assiniboine River.

In April 2020, Kimbaya graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Science.

She works with Indigenous Peoples in BC to advance their capacity and ensure they are resourced, united, and recognized to actively exercise governance and jurisdiction of all fresh waters in their traditional territories. She dreams that one day Indigenous communities across Turtle Island will be recognized as the primary stewards and decision-makers of water and aquatic resources in their traditional territory.



Executive Summary

First Nations in British Columbia hold a sacred responsibility and relationship to water and should be included in all decision-making around water.

Women and Two-Spirit individuals, youth, Elders and Knowledge Holders all hold important duties and responsibilities to water. Each of their voices and stories must be uplifted and empowered in any conversation surrounding water. For Indigenous Peoples, water sustains health, spirituality, and physical well-being. Indigenous Peoples have stewarded watersheds and coastal and marine environments across Turtle Island for millennia. Many BC First Nations have created or revitalized laws protecting streams, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and much more. First Nations in BC have taken care of and managed water for the benefit of present and future generations. They continue to apply Indigenous Knowledge to monitor creek levels and temperature and use traditional fishing and aquaculture techniques like clam gardens, salmon ceremonies, and fish weirs. Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island and globally are raising their voices to draw attention not only to water issues faced in their communities but also to water issues that affect all Canadians and the world.

Through the hands of colonialism, resource extraction, and capitalism, water in so-called “Canada” continues to be disrespected, misused, and polluted by industrial development, agriculture, and urbanization. On top of it all, colonialism and capitalism are fueling the effects of climate change that Indigenous Peoples, alongside other groups, tend to carry the burden of through environmental racism. We must respect, appreciate and take care of our water to have a wholistic approach to climate change. In so-called “Canada,” water

has been managed through a series of federal and provincial laws designed for various economic and environmental purposes. Many argue that there is a conflict between “industry-specific legislation” that grants permission to use water and “environmental legislation” that attempts to minimize damage caused by resource development. It is also often the case that water in First Nations territories is degraded by activities outside or adjacent to communities and traditional lands.

While the BC First Nations Water Rights Strategy (2013) is currently being renewed by the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), BC First Nations could benefit from a complementary high-level wholistic collective BC First Nations water declaration that can be adopted and supported by crown provincial and local governments and water allies. A collective BC First Nation Declaration can guide and clarify the sacred responsibility and relationship First Nations have with water to the general public, government, and water allies. BC First Nations must be a key player in leading and developing a wholistic Water Declaration that ties in all the roles and spaces that water plays in their community's social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.



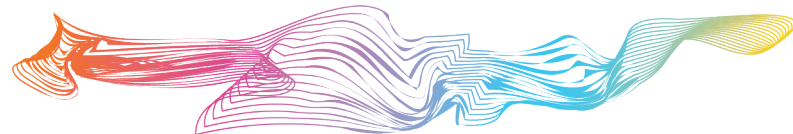
ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph

Lucero González Ruiz

UNTOLD STORIES: ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN CANADA



Lucero moved to Vancouver from Mexico City in 2015 to study Biological Sciences, Conservation, and Evolution at SFU. During that time, Lucero served as president of the Association of Latin American Students at SFU, where she raised awareness of social issues in Latin America. Lucero is passionate about climate change, as well as social and environmental justice, which are challenges that can only be solved with the inclusion of local communities. Before moving to Canada, Lucero was part of many student led social movement in Mexico City. She currently holds a position as the Biodiversity Campaigner for Georgia Strait Alliance, a local non-profit environmental organization. She hopes to combine her love for conservation biology and social justice to create a positive change in communities that are often overlooked by the western environmental movement. Lucero lives as an uninvited guest and settler in the unceded territories of the q̓íç əy̓ (Katzie) and q̓'w̓a:ḥ̓ λ'əḥ̓ (Kwantlen) people.



Executive Summary

Environmental racism has been present and harming communities for decades, however, for a long time Canada's federal government had done little to advance solutions to this problem, or even acknowledge its existence.

Now there is a proposed federal bill that aims to understand and tackle environmental racism in Canada. However, I believe that for it to be effective and truly center on racialized communities and individuals in it, it needs to be approached from an intersectional perspective that prioritizes the healing and unique experiences of these communities and individuals.

Environmental racism, a form of systemic racism, happens when environmental policies and practices intentionally, or unintentionally result in increased harm to Indigenous, Black, or other racialized communities in the form of increased pollution, health risks, diseases, violence, substance abuse, etc.

There have been, and still are, multiple cases of environmental racism in Canada, including the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion happening in BC that has disregarded the concern of communities affected along its route, and that have publicly opposed its development. Additionally, Indigenous people across Canada still face water-boil advisories that have made their communities sick for decades, something that is unacceptable and does not happen to the rest of the country.

To truly understand and address a systemic problem such as environmental racism, we need to look at it with an intersectional lens. Environmental racism and systemic racism in general, are not one-size-fits-all types of

problems. Different communities, groups, and individuals experience the issues in different ways. For example, even though both Indigenous and Black people face racism and are victims of environmental racism in Canada, Indigenous people are targeted differently because, through colonialism, their connection to the land has been specifically used to inflict violence upon them and their territories.

Additionally, environmental racism in Canada also needs to be seen as a gender equality issue because women, girls, and intersex People of Colour are targeted not only for their race, ethnicity, or skin colour, but also for their gender. Their intersectional identities put them in greater danger of experiencing both racial violence as well as gender-based violence.

Because environmental racism endangers peoples' lives, safety, culture, and identity and puts them at greater risk of violence and discrimination, the issue is not only an environmental rights issue but a human rights one. Therefore, Canada needs to take responsibility and respect the international rights that it is violating by allowing environmental racism to happen.

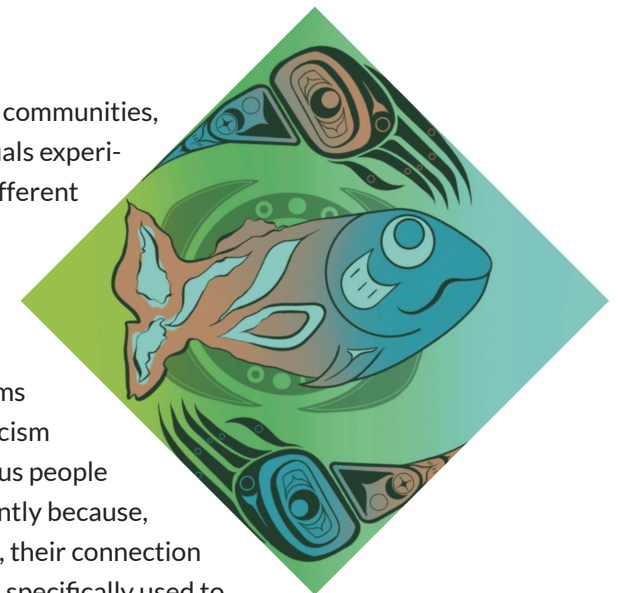


ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph



Fortunately, after years of advocacy by community groups, environmental racism finally made it to the agendas of the federal government.

Fortunately, after years of advocacy by community groups, such as the ENRICH project, environmental racism finally made it to the agendas of the federal government. Currently, Member of Parliament Elizabeth May is attempting to pass a federal law that will examine and eliminate environmental racism. Bill-226, “An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice,” focuses on requiring the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, in consultation or cooperation with interested parties, to develop a national strategy to address environmental racism and the harm caused by it. The Bill is a positive start to addressing environmental racism in Canada and if passed, will be a real opportunity to tackle it.

However, in order for the Bill to have a positive impact and avoid harming racialized communities, groups, and individuals in the process, it needs to take several factors into consideration.

For the purpose of this policy brief, I focus on the implementation of Section 3 (b)(iv): The collection of information and statistics relating to health outcomes in communities located in proximity to environmental hazards.

I argue that the collection, analysis, and consecutive use of data from communities, groups, and individuals affected by environmental racism, needs to take a decolonized approach and consider different factors such as:

- The proper use of disaggregated data by following and building on the recommendations from the work that several Black, Indigenous, and other racialized groups have done to advance the use of that type of data to tackle issues affecting their communities.
- Ensuring that the information and data being collected are only used for the purpose of resolving environmental racism in Canada.
- Allowing communities to tell their stories on the matter they decide will truly represent them and prioritizing this story sharing over just numbers or fixed parameters.
- Centering the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP).
- Allowing multiple and diverse definitions of “health outcomes” that will reflect the unique experiences of the surveyed peoples.

Along with other recommendations, I aim to clearly outline the need to decolonize data collection and the policy changes that are eventually made with that data in a way that centers on the healing and unique stories of communities, groups, and individuals affected by environmental racism.



“I think for young people the biggest thing is getting over the hurdle of understanding or believing that we are qualified to do policy work.”

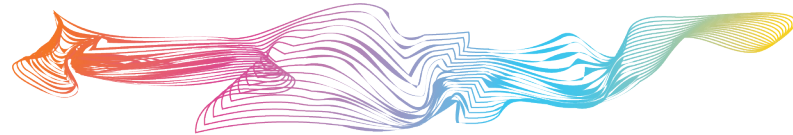
—Youth Policy Program Past Participant

Madeleine Bégin

HOUSING FOR THE URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY



Madeleine Bégin is of Mi'kmaw and French Canadian ancestry. She is a second-generation sixties scoop survivor who was born and raised on the traditional unceded territories of the lək'wəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples. She is a certified Indigenous Family Support worker and Early Childhood Educational Assistant. She is currently employed as a consultant for the Victoria Native Friendship Centre's Aboriginal Infant Development program. She co-chairs the board for VIDEA, which is an International Development Non-Profit that works with Indigenous and other marginalized people. In her spare time, she proudly co-hosts a podcast with Katelynn H. Adams called "Spilling Labrador Tea Under Cedar Trees," which covers various different topics surrounding Indigenous issues.



Executive Summary

The policy brief you will be reading examines the housing crisis impacting the urban Indigenous community in BC and four recommendations on how to resolve it.

Following those recommendations is information on how these recommendations address the calls to action and justice found in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S), and uphold the rights found in United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph



Immediate action needs to be taken to correct the lack of affordable housing and inadequate rental supplements for the urban Indigenous populations.

Qwuy'um'aat Elliott

RESTORING QUW'UTSUN SNUW'UY'ULH (TEACHINGS, TRADITIONS, AND LAW) IN POLICY



Situating Self

As a Quw'utsun Sleni (Cowichan Woman), I have spent a lifetime grappling, journeying, and navigating the bureaucracies of policy, and the great limitations imposed under the *Indian Act* and the layering of different government policies. As a Quw'utsun Sleni, it is a necessity to be multifaceted in housing, lands, child and family services, health, government, education, economic development, and justice while also embracing healing and self-determination through re-claiming identity, language, culture, songs, dance, and self. Many people praise my path of obtaining a Bachelor of Business Administration, Certificate in First Nations Housing Management, and a Masters of Community Planning, while also being a mother, living on my own, starting my own consulting business, and continuing my career trajectory.

Despite my external achievements, my greatest journey has been striving toward being happy, humble, and “living a good life.” The construct of “living a good life” is rooted in the Quw'utsun worldview, snuw'uy'ulh, protocol, ceremony and the teachings passed down from our Ancestors. As a Quw'utsun Sleni, I have been honoured with the opportunity to live, learn, and/or spend a significant amount of time with my grandparents. My grandparents act as pillars or guideposts of everything that I do, and the core teachings shared with me, and that I hold closely are:

- Being present
- Greeting the day with gratitude
- Treating everyone with respect
- Embracing change
- Moving forward

“My mind empties, my heart opens, my spirit soars.”

— RICHARD WAGAMESE

My journey thus far has been greatly influenced by their presence in my life, and their on-going and continuous love and support both personally and professionally. Although they are in the spirit world, I still carry their words closely in my heart. At times, I hear echoes of their words from other Knowledge Keepers, Elders, or see tokens and symbols that trigger my memories. This affirms my on-going connection to spirit.

From the onset, my grandparents instilled the importance of going to school, pursuing further education, working, and raising my son. Initially, I struggled to see the importance and value of pursuing an education, because I recognized

the legacy, history and on-going atrocities of colonization, cultural genocide, and assimilation. However, as Murray Sinclair stated, “education is what got us here and education is what will get us out” (Hilton, 2020). As I continue my journey in unravelling the truth, the history, and the stories, I am confronted by an on-going and an internal conflict of reconciling myself, my family, my community, and my nation.

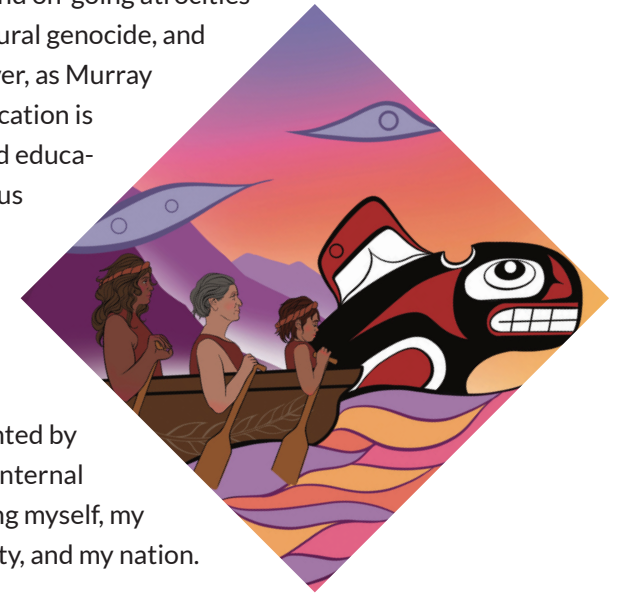


ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph

Opening the Table

As a Quw'utsun Sleni, I am practicing active resistance and radical existence, because I feel now, more than ever, that the resurgence of the Indigenous Ways of Being is important for our environmental, political, financial, and social landscapes. Our community is on the verge of mass destruction however, this is not stated without the precursor that we live in an era of extensive capacity, knowledge, resources, power, and connections that could enable us to shift these existing conditions significantly.

Before starting the work, I would like to begin by opening the table. Normally, within my community, these discussions would happen around a table with many representatives/relations of all backgrounds, and sharing a meal or a snack with coffee and tea. I would anticipate these representatives/relations would be anyone within First Nations governance, youth, Elders, professionals, and other external representatives, whether they work for any level of government, non-profits, for-profit or truly,

any walk of life who is interested in shifting the world as we know it today. There is a seat for everyone at this table.

I would like to raise my hands virtually to those who interact with this paper. I would like to thank you for acknowledging, witnessing, and allowing me to share my worldview with you. I would like to recognize that now, more than ever, we are living in unprecedented times, which has unfortunately become the new norm. I would like to recognize and acknowledge the strength, will power, and tenacity to carry forward and continue to strive for a better life for generations to come. I would like to acknowledge your on-going dedication and commitment to yourself, families, and communities. I would also like to send you strength, prayers, best wishes, and wellness as you continue your life journey.

Huy steep q'u (thank you all).

Taylor Arnt

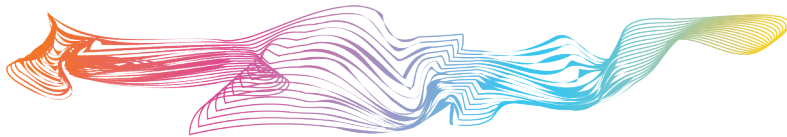
IT'S TIME WE HAD "THE TALK": THE CASE FOR COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION REFORMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Taylor Arnt (she/they) is of mixed Anishinaabe (Ojibway) and European heritage, from Treaty 1 territory (Winnipeg, Manitoba). She is a member of Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve, which is signatory to Treaty 4 and located on Treaty 2 lands. They reside as a guest on Xʷməθkʷəyəm, Sḵwxwú7mesh and səliiwətaʔ territory.

Taylor holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management and has work experience throughout the federal public service, nonprofit, and Indigenous governance sectors. As the second Indigenous Peoples Specialist hired by the Canadian Red Cross, Taylor has been deployed to 10+ First Nations communities, assisting them through public health and climate crises. Now as a Policy Analyst for the BC Assembly of First Nations, Taylor advocates for the title and treaty rights of the 203 First Nations communities across British Columbia. Taylor will begin their MA in Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice in September 2022.

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Executive Summary

Content Warning: mentions of gender-based and sexual violence throughout this paper. If you are feeling triggered and require emotional or mental health support, please call VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808 or visit <https://endingviolence.org/need-help/> for more resources.

This policy ask proposes comprehensive reforms to British Columbia's (BC's) sexual education curriculum that emphasize consent, sexual well-being, gender-equitable relationships, and the full-inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Why?

Because sexual assault is the only violent crime that is not in decline, and gender-based and sexual violence continue to be a reprehensibly common occurrence in BC.^{2,3}

Though it may be deeply entrenched in our patriarchal world, gender-based and sexual violence is 100% preventable. Teaching comprehensive sexuality education ("sex-ed") can play an integral role in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence by creating a culture of consent, gender-equitable relationships, and proactive sexual health amongst BC youth. If we fail to teach these integral lessons, we will subject another generation of children, youth, and young adults to reprehensible harm.

The following recommendations were proposed after a thorough review of best practices in comprehensive sexual education and BC's current sexual education curriculum:

1. Ensure all schools explicitly mention consent in their sexual education lessons.

2. Teach students the role they have to play in eradicating gender-based violence.
3. Include 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health as part of the sexual education curriculum.
4. Extend mandatory sexual education into Grades 11 and 12.
5. Emphasize sexual well-being (not solely the prevention of negative outcomes) in sexual-education curriculum.
6. Recruit and establish a database of certified sexual-health educators who can supplement classroom sexual education lessons on an ongoing basis.
7. Develop digital and printed resources for parents that elaborate on why the lessons covered in sexual-education curriculum are being taught.

These seven policy recommendations proposed, if implemented, have the ability to:

- Teach students how to effectively give, withhold, and withdraw consent, and respect the sexual rights of others;
- Actively dispel gender and other stereotypes, as well as misconceptions about gender-based and sexual violence,

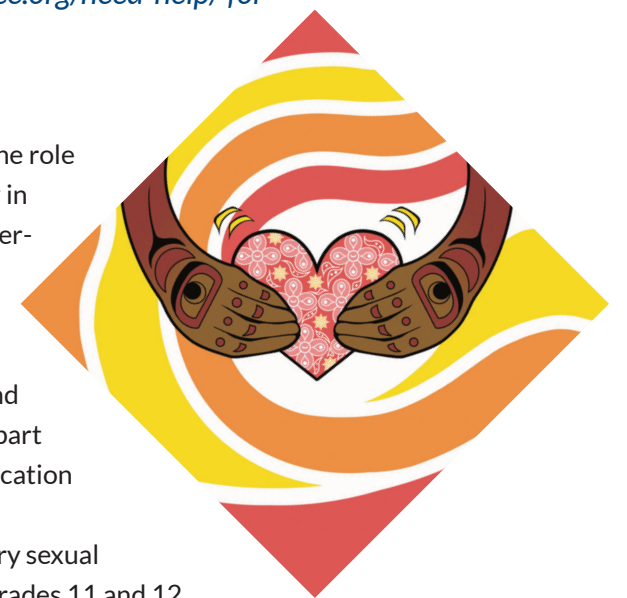


ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph

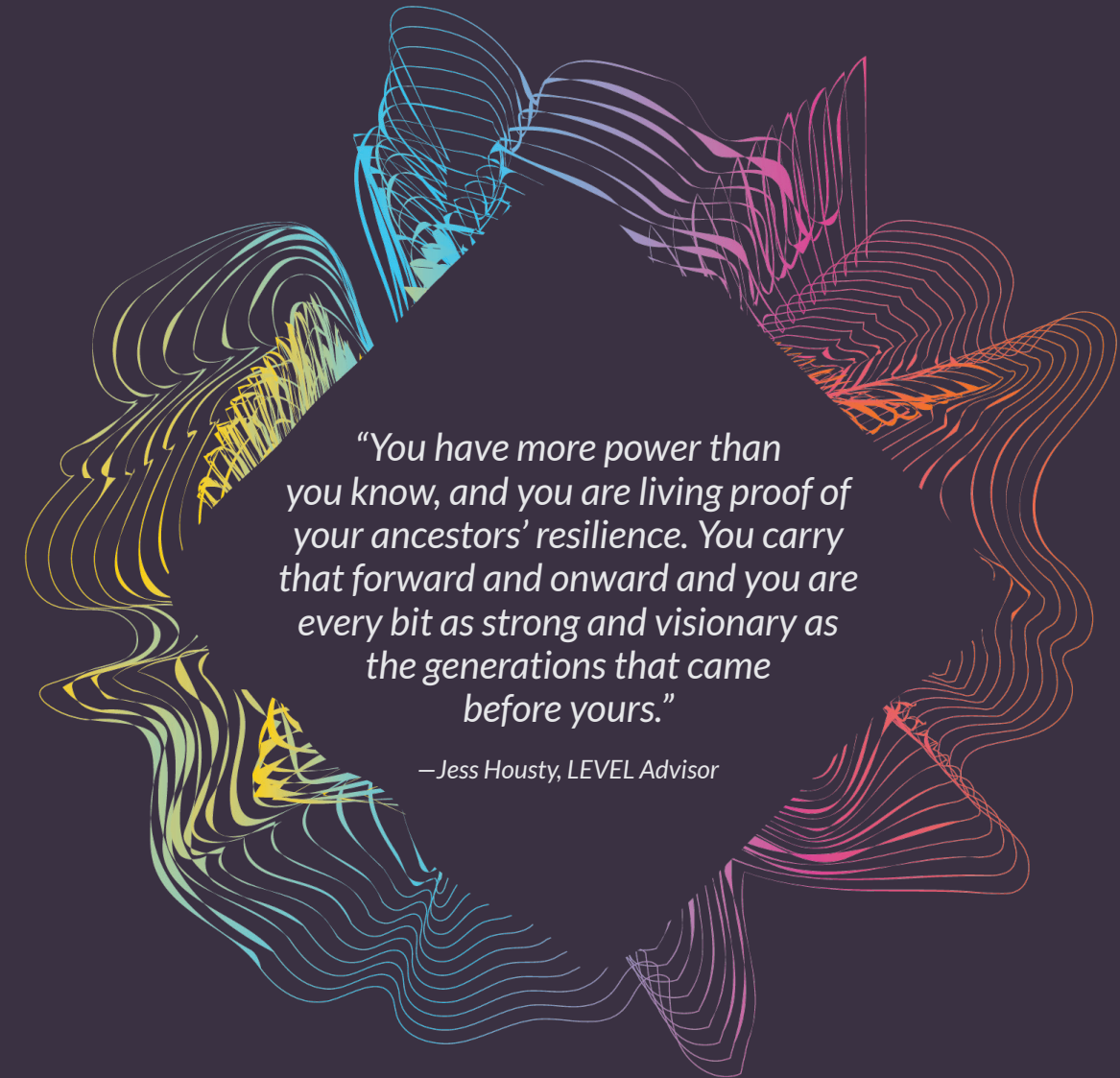
in favour of a culture of consent and healthy, equitable relationships;

- Normalize 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health so that the sexual education curriculum becomes relevant for all students;
- Ensure all BC students are equipped to make safe, informed decisions about their sexuality;
- Build a database of certified sexual-health educators to improve student access to comprehensive, scientifically accurate information;
- Garner parent buy-in to the sexual education curriculum as it undergoes transformational change;
- Reframe sex as a pleasurable, life-enhancing experience, grounded in consent, safety, and respect.

As a survivor, I have bravely chosen to speak up and shed light on the realities of sexual violence. I hope that in reading, you bravely choose to treat comprehensive sexuality education as an urgent public policy priority, and act as an ally in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence.



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“You have more power than you know, and you are living proof of your ancestors’ resilience. You carry that forward and onward and you are every bit as strong and visionary as the generations that came before yours.”

—Jess Housty, LEVEL Advisor

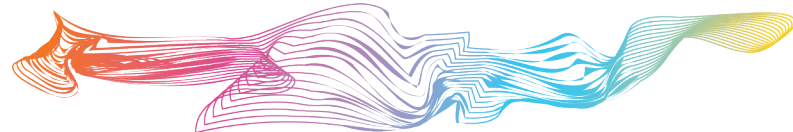
Taylor Behn-Tsakoza

FROM SUICIDE PREVENTION TO LIFE PROMOTION: LIVING A LONG AND GOOD LIFE



Taylor Behn-Tsakoza is a Dene cis woman from Fort Nelson and Prophet River First Nations in British Columbia's Treaty 8 Territory. She is westernly trained in Physical Literacy and approaches her work using a holistic-wellness model like her people have always done. Utilizing her education and traditional teachings combined with her passion for working with Indigenous youth and communities, Taylor currently works in the fields of Clean Energy, Indigenous Politics, and Recreation. Having been guided by her grandparents, mother, and mentors, Taylor is an advocate for her people, land, and their inherent land and treaty rights. Dedicated to elevating youth voices and addressing the need for opportunities that create connection to culture and community, Taylor is currently the Female Youth Representative for the BC Assembly of First Nations and runs a land-based wellness program called Ask Auntie in her community for young Rez girls just like her. Her special interests are in life promotion, land-based wellness, and Indigenous governance.

Having had the privilege to speak provincially, nationally, and internationally on historical and contemporary issues on Turtle Island, Taylor is committed to creating a future that honors all of our Ancestors, and that our living kin and those yet to come can thrive in.



Executive Summary

Content Warning: mentions of suicide are throughout this paper. If you're experiencing emotional distress and want to talk, call the Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310. It's toll-free and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week or connect online at hopeforwellness.ca. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 or the number for emergency services in your community.

WHAT GIVES ME AUTHORITY TO SPEAK ON THIS?

I started this journey in life promotion over five years ago, and honestly came into it not really knowing what I was getting myself into. I thought I was going to prevent suicides across Turtle Island by bringing a Dene lens to what was currently being done to address this major crisis in our communities, which was very reactive and intervention-based to say the least. Little did I know I was going to be participating in a movement to shift from preventing suicides to changing our thinking completely, where we meet people where they're at, and center their culture and life in everything we do. Growing up on the Rez was tough, there's no doubt about that, but when it was instilled in me that if you die by suicide you wouldn't make it to heaven, I knew colonialism and Catholicism had completely destroyed my Nation's ability to see those individuals as sacred and worthy of an opportunity to see Elderhood. I believe life promotion is how we can bring back a sense of hope and longevity to our lands.

CURRENT STATE OF THIS CRISIS WE FACE:

Suicide rates amongst Indigenous people in Canada are up to three times higher than that

of non-Indigenous people, with rates and disparities affecting First Nation and Inuit youth the greatest. The loss of land, culture, language, and community connections at the hands of colonial policies and systems, has greatly contributed to this epidemic that Indigenous people face. Feeling a sense of hopelessness and not-belonging are attributes that lead to individuals experiencing premature and unnatural deaths in this way. Changing the way we look at and talk about suicide in our communities is crucial to ensuring Indigenous young people have the opportunity to live a long and good life.

A lens we can look through is called *life promotion*, where life is centered over risk-factor based approaches. Whereas suicide prevention is a deficit-centered approach to resources and efforts for individuals, life promotion offers Indigenous youth a foundation rooted in culture, holistic wellness, and healing through building connection and sense of hope, purpose, and belonging. Life promotion is a concept embraced by Indigenous cultures, and is an approach based on the belief that all young people are capable of finding their own path to a holistic and meaningful life. Life promotion is a shift in thinking that is grounded

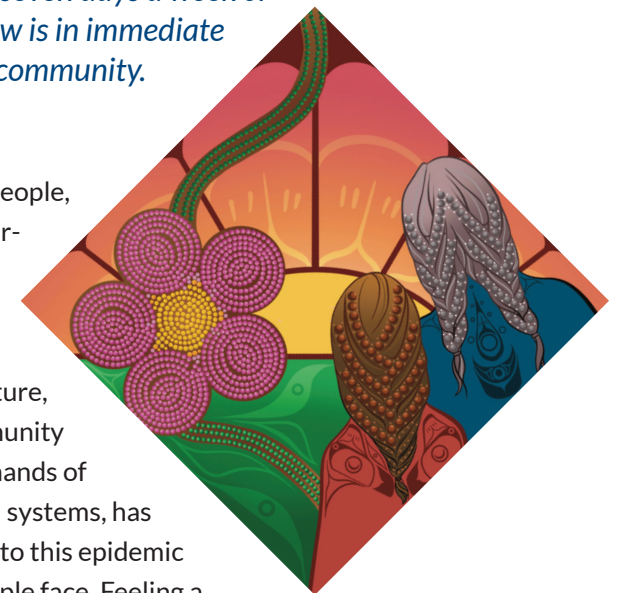
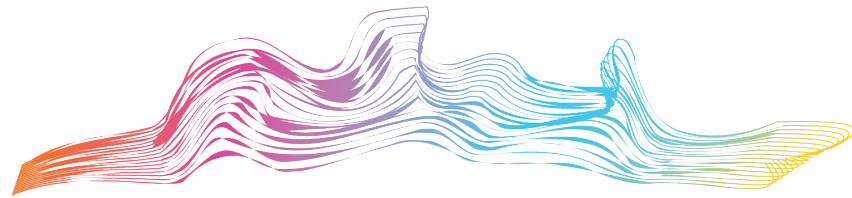


ILLUSTRATION
Jessica Joseph

in culture, community, and self. The narrative of Indigenous people in this country is often focused on the negative and outdated parts, when there is so much more beauty, love, and laughter that needs to be highlighted.

Many organizations across the country are leading this work in life promotion, and by those initiatives centering Indigenous youth voices the message of hope, belonging, meaning and purpose are spreading. Therefore this policy project is to highlight the work

being done to advance life promotion across the country and how we can localize some of that work here in BC to continue to promote life amongst Indigenous youth in this province. As we continue to deal with the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the discoveries of children at former residential school sites, a crippling health care system, and many other events, the approach to promoting life has to be thought out, inclusive, and respectful of people's realities.



Whereas suicide prevention is a deficit-centered approach to resources and efforts for individuals, life promotion offers Indigenous youth a foundation rooted in culture, holistic wellness, and healing through building connection and sense of hope, purpose, and belonging.



“Sometimes it felt like I didn’t have the credentials, I didn’t have the work experience to be in the right position to be making analysis and to be making recommendations to be implemented for public policy, it was hard but it was really worth it.”

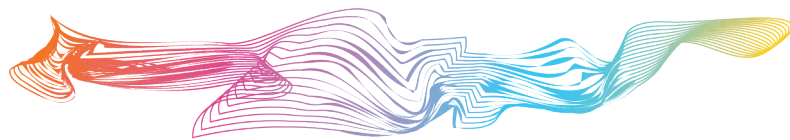
—Youth Policy Program
Past Participant

WeiChun Kua

STATUS FOR ALL



WeiChun Kua (柯伟俊) is a second-generation stateless Chinese migrant, originally from Brunei Darussalam. He's an active climate and migrant justice organizer and has been living, learning and playing on the unceded and traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples for six years. He's led campaigns that led to Simon Fraser University (SFU) fully divesting from fossil fuel, and continues to organize around issues that affect migrant students and workers.



Executive Summary

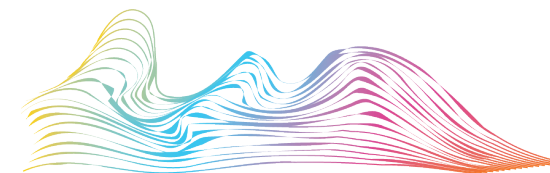
As Canada continues to face issues of labour shortages and an aging population, migrants are filling in the gap and working in essential jobs in sectors such as healthcare and food.

Despite decades of how much migrants consistently contribute to the economy and labour market, they are not being treated with the humanity and dignity they deserve. The immigration system in Canada constantly keeps migrants in a state of temporary and precarious status, by putting migrants on temporary permits. The pathway of obtaining Permanent Resident status is filled with systemic barriers and discriminatory conditions that exclude many migrants and keep it out of their reach. This state of temporary status deprives migrants the rights and protection they deserve from exploitation and abuse. From wage theft and unsafe working

conditions, to fear of losing their permits and risking deportations, migrants are often left at the mercy of their employers and the institutions that exploit them. In order to truly address these issues and improve the lives of migrants, the federal government and the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) must stop treating migrants as temporary, and provide permanent status for all migrants.



ILLUSTRATION
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velasco



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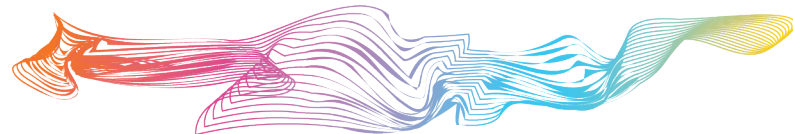
WY Emily Tsang

THE ADVENTURE GAP: INCREASING ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES



WY 泳仔 (they/she) dreamed of climbing mountains and sailing across the oceans ever since she was a fun(ner)-sized human being. In the present day, they are an avid road cyclist, bouldering beginner, and occasional mountain biker. Being a settler on stolen Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh homelands and part of the East-Asian Diaspora, WY has always found herself navigating spaces of beauty, discomfort, adventure, and yearning. She is on a pursuit of a meaningful and respectful relationship with the beautiful, unceded land where she spends time experimenting recreationally as an uninvited guest.

She is a graduate of the Global Resource Systems program at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Among their many hats, WY is a freelance filmmaker, photographer, podcast producer, and community builder. Her passion lies in all aspects of food—be it growing her own vegetables, attempting new recipes, or ensuring her community has access to fresh and culturally familiar produce. WY strongly believes in the power of sharing resources and building on existing community assets to support folks in reaching their fullest potential.



Executive Summary

When the pandemic began in 2020, people flocked to the mountains, beaches, and forests to seek adventures.

Tents, bikes, and stand-up paddleboards flew off the shelves and quickly became hard-to-find commodities. The BC Parks campsite reservation system crashed on the day it opened and over 35,000 bookings were made in just 5 hours. Day-use hiking passes for British Columbia's most popular provincial parks were introduced to control the number of visitors each day. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type-2 diabetes and it has immense benefits for mental well-being as well.

The outdoors is often painted as free and accessible. This is, unfortunately, not the case. This policy report highlights the barriers that people face, which impact diversity on the trails. While it is impossible to list all of the barriers that each individual faces within all of the different sports, the factors are typically social, financial, historical, and cultural. For example, more intense, equipment-centric sports such as mountain biking and skiing have high costs of entry due to the expensive gear, apparel, and lessons. Furthermore, it can be time-consuming to travel to the venue, which may not be accessible by public transportation and requires a personal vehicle.

While researching for this policy brief, it became obvious that there is a severe insufficiency of available data that tracks the demographics of the people who are participating in outdoor recreation in Canada. The lack of data hinders the possibility for

programs that aim to increase diversity and inclusion in the outdoors by reducing barriers and increasing access to people with disabilities and people who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, women, and LGBTQIA2S+.

This policy brief aims to lobby the BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, as well as organizations and businesses in the outdoor industry, to consider implementing the following recommendations into policy:

1. **Implement an Outdoor Equity Grant Program** that partners with private businesses to provide funding for marginalized communities.
2. **Implement a Government-Backed Equipment Loan Assistance program** that offers payment plans for people wishing to purchase gear in installments.
3. **Provide specialty outdoor programming to Grades 1–12 at underserved schools.**
4. **Advocate for BC Parks and outdoor industry to collect demographic-based data in Canada** to better inform policies and design programs for marginalized communities.

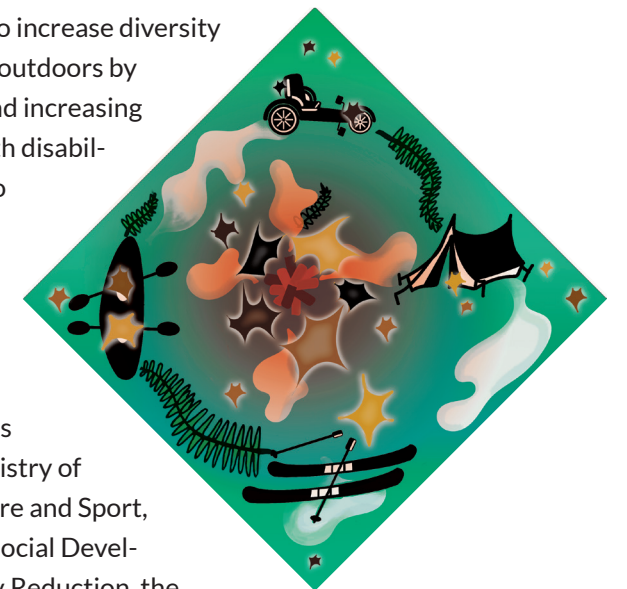
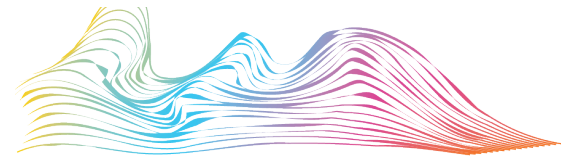


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5. Improve public transportation options to trailheads.
6. Implement a Guaranteed Minimum Income Program that provides for items beyond the basic necessities for survival, but also for the needs for an individual to thrive such as recreation and self-care.

In order for the outdoors to become truly accessible, it is imperative that First Nations communities play a key role in the decision-making process. Indigenous people have stewarded the lands since time immemorial, and the “public” land that is now used for recreational purposes was once used for ceremony, harvesting, hunting, and other activities. Ultimately, to exist on stolen ancestral lands is a privilege that should not be taken lightly.

In a world and time where everyone is encouraged to spend time outside, it is important to pay attention to who is on the trail, and who is not, and to reflect on the conditions that have led to this discrepancy.



According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type-2 diabetes and it has immense benefits for mental well-being as well.



“It’s important to remember whose lands we live and work on and each of our journeys that brought us here. You each have your own experiences and stories and they are so important to remember as we look at creating policies that work for all of us and for our communities to flourish together.”

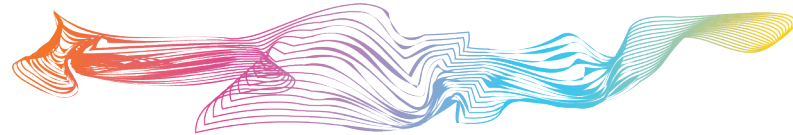
—Youth Policy Program Faculty

Yara Younis

BEYOND ASYLUM: REFUGEE CLAIMANTS ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION



Born and raised in Dubai (UAE), Yara is a Palestinian refugee who had felt detached from her 'home' in the Gaza Strip for the longest time. Now, having spent years contemplating and unlearning colonial narratives, she considers the meaning of statelessness, as well as how systems of power co-opt and shape refugee experiences. Prior to settling on unceded Coast Salish lands, Yara worked at the Delma Institute in Abu Dhabi as a MENA research analyst and as the deputy advisor and project coordinator for the UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development. She completed her MA in International Studies at Simon Fraser University, where she was a Researcher for the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies. Yara is currently the Project Manager at the RADIUS Refugee Livelihood Lab. In her free time, Yara enjoys reading, music, sharing a meal with friends, and taking long walks.



Executive Summary

Refugee claimant students face multiple barriers to beginning or continuing their higher education in Canada which leads to reduced completion rates, substantial stress and additional precarity, and decreased ability to fully participate in society and the skilled Canadian workforce.

One of the toughest barriers is one that universities have control over: Classifying refugee claimants as international students who must pay fees over five times what they might pay if classified as domestic students.

Guidelines issued by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training describe allowable exceptions to international student classification, including explicitly that "...refugee claimants who have yet to be determined Convention refugees are eligible or considered to be domestic students."⁴

While no public BC universities have chosen to utilize this allowable exception, Toronto's York University is challenging this inequity by using a similar flexibility in Ontario's guidelines,

offering domestic tuition rates to refugee-claimant students through the "Protected Person Program."⁵

I urge Simon Fraser University (SFU) to recognize refugee-claimant students as an equity-deserving group, differentiated from international students, with access to domestic tuition fee rates. This is an equity leadership opportunity among universities in BC, within federal and provincial BC guidelines, and directly aligned with SFU's objectives to enhance inclusion for equity deserving groups and to develop initiatives to improve affordability and accessibility for students.⁶



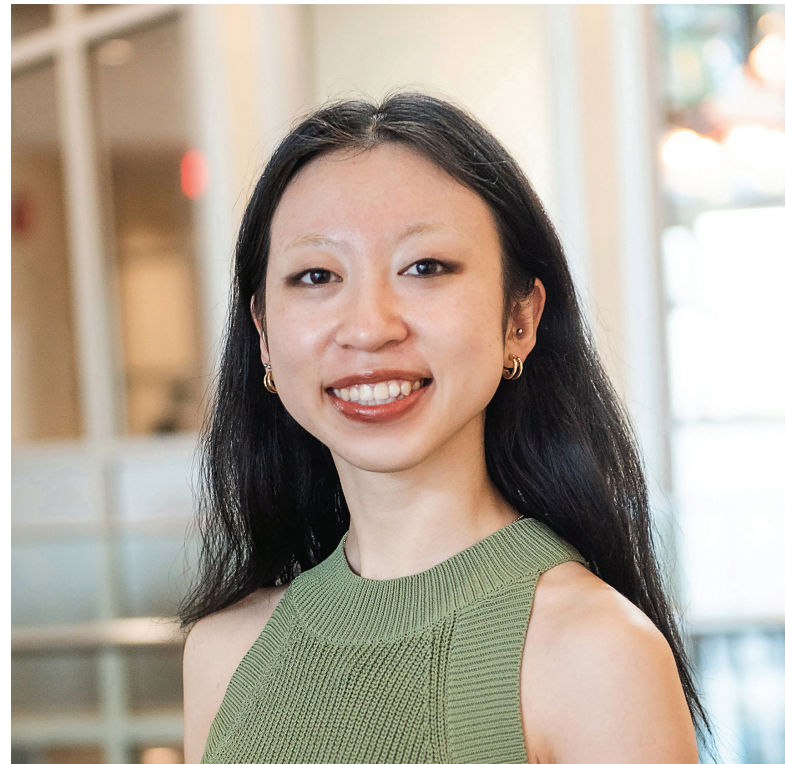
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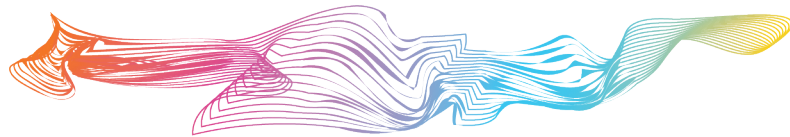
One of the toughest barriers is one that universities have control over: Classifying refugee claimants as international students who must pay fees over five times what they might pay if classified as domestic students.

Cristina Kim

IM/MIGRANT SEX WORKERS ACCESS TO HEALTH



Cristina (she/her) is a Queer, diasporic, Korean settler who was born and raised in Chile. Five years ago, she took the opportunity to study on stolen Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories to learn more about the world, hoping to figure out what she could do as an individual in the face of global injustices. As she completed her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in International Relations, she focused her interdisciplinary research on human rights, transnational activism, and gender & queer studies. She now seeks to explore ways to meaningfully advocate for collective liberation by using anti-oppressive and community-engaged approaches that do not rely on violent systems of policing, and are instead rooted in transformative justice and community care.



Executive Summary

While Canada boasts a universal healthcare system, sex workers who recently im/migrated to Vancouver face approximately 3x higher prevalence of institutional barriers to accessing care than the general Canadian-born population.⁷

The “Universal Health Coverage” (UHC) that Canada is globally applauded for is not as universal as it appears to be, as numerous women, recent immigrants, and Indigenous communities face multiple institutional barriers when trying to access good quality and appropriate health services.⁸

Although a myriad of factors may account for this alarming discrepancy in health access among im/migrant sex workers in particular, the two most critical determinants at the root of this issue are: **(1) sex work-related barriers**, including criminalization and stigma, which deter sex workers’ health-seeking behaviours for fear of disclosure and judgment (among other factors); and **(2) im/migration-related barriers**, including but not limited to precarious legal status, language barriers, and difficulty obtaining both public and private insurance.

Notably, Canadian immigration policies prohibit newcomers and temporary workers from engaging in the sex work industry. In fact, work permit conditions explicitly state that they are “not valid for employment in businesses related to the sex trade such as strip clubs, massage parlours, or escort services.”⁹ As a result, racialized im/migrant sex workers are subjected to a dual risk of incarceration and deportation, which increase their vulnerability to various forms of violence, which then becomes seen as normal or justified. In turn,

this “dual burden of criminalization”¹⁰ shapes im/migrant sex workers’ access to health services, including but not limited to HIV/STI testing and care.¹¹

While various human rights organizations—from Amnesty International¹² globally to PACE and Pivot Legal Society¹³ locally—have repeatedly shared that criminalization of the sex industry perpetuates and further exacerbates harms that violate the human rights of those engaged in sex work, Canada continues to criminalize sex work through ‘end-demand’ laws that prohibit the purchasing and organizing of sex work services.¹⁴ Instead of neglecting evidence-based research on these harms, it is imperative for Canada to take action and adopt rights-based policies at federal, provincial, and municipal levels to ensure that im/migrant sex workers have access to social support and health services without stigmatization, discrimination, and criminalization.

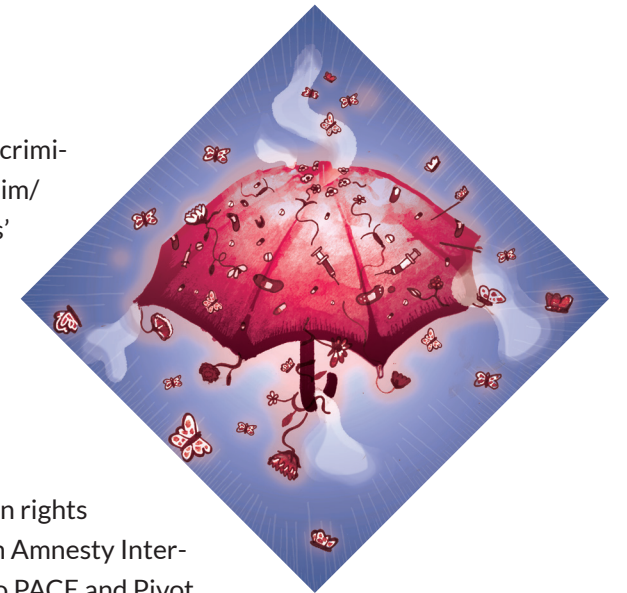


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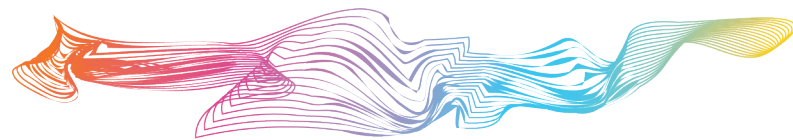
Kristen Walkus

ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL FOODS



Gilakasla, nugwa'am Xwamdasbe'. Hello, my name is Kristen Walkus, I am from the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation. I was born and raised in Port Hardy, BC, in Kwakiutl Territory. I currently reside as an uninvited guest on Tla'amin Traditional Territory.

I currently work as my Nation's Lands and Resource Office Administrator. I started as a Fisheries Technician as a way to get out to our territories and reconnect. My career started growing from there. Connecting to my roots was and is integral for me. My passion is to see more of our community have the opportunity to be back on our territories, reconnecting to land and practicing our culture and traditions.



Executive Summary

The Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP) is administered by the federal government through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

The CSSP manual is a reference document for monitoring, classifying, and controlling areas where bivalve molluscan shellfish (hereafter referred to as shellfish) are harvested. The federal policies and criteria in the manual are stated to “apply to all harvesting of all shellfish unless otherwise specified.”

In order to have a site open for clam harvesting, we as Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, are forced to comply with the CSSP and send out mussel samples to test for contamination. Mussels are used for testing because of their tendency to accumulate toxins more quickly than other bivalve species.

Testing consists of gathering mussels at the beginning of the season, making sure they are accessible for use throughout the season. When we start the testing in Fall/Winter, we start with weekly testing for three weeks, after that, we are able to switch to biweekly samples. To retrieve the samples from our Territories, we either go in by boat which, in the wintertime on an average day takes about 2-2 ½ hours one way to retrieve the samples. Or we pay one of the salvage operators in the territory, and the floatplane operator, to have them shipped to Port Hardy. Once we have the mussel samples in the office, they are generally frozen and sent the next day to the CFIA by Purolator or plane.

The requirement imposed under the CSSP to conduct testing in order to exercise our inherent rights gets very expensive, very fast. Since we have started, we have spent approx-

imately \$10,000 on testing alone. In this time, we have applied for funding and have been turned down, and taking on this cost to access the clam fishery long-term is not feasible for the Nation.

Article 39 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states: Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

Further, the Sparrow test asks when there is a valid legislative objective to the crown limiting Aboriginal rights, if the infringement has been minimized, and whether fair compensation has been offered.

Clams continue to play a vital role in food security, and passing down traditions and culture and, while the CSSP is intended to ensure human safety in the consumption of shellfish, Canada is not recognizing its obligations to protect Aboriginal rights, and our priority right to access and harvest shellfish for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes by implementing bureaucratic barriers in the name of conservation, that are neither minimally impairing or accommodating.

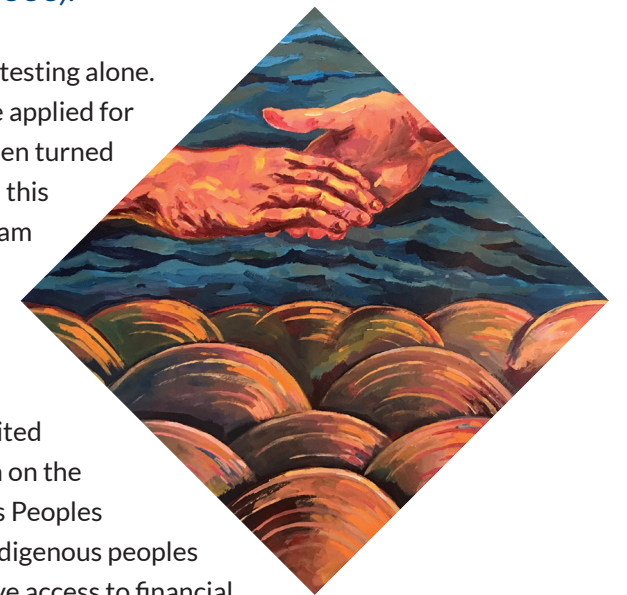


ILLUSTRATION
Yaimel López

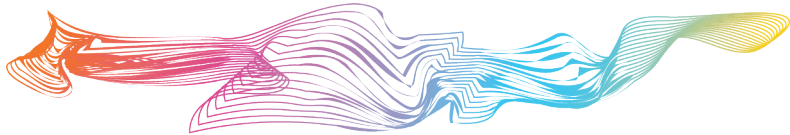
Amy Min Byol Kim

MUNICIPAL VOTING STATUS FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTS



Amy immigrated to so-called “Canada” with her family at the age of 10, and their eight-year journey to find permanent residency was met with bureaucratic and language barriers. They all worked tirelessly, but there was difficulty in adapting to a new culture. It was many years after her university education that Amy learned the truth about “Canada” and the ongoing genocide that is still taking place today. Since then, she began reorienting herself and using her energy to fight against colonialism, capitalism, and for migrant rights.

In her spare time, Amy enjoys watching esports and playing various genres of video games. She hopes to exercise her passion in finding a career in the gaming industry.



Issue/Purpose

A resolution was passed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities in 2019 to call for voting status of Permanent Residents in municipal elections.

For many years, Canada attributed its economic success to immigrants due to its aging population. Recently, Immigrant, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) stated that “[i]mmigration...will be particularly important during Canada’s post-pandemic recovery.”¹⁵ As statistics suggest, over one quarter of the working age population (from ages 25 to 54) in Canada is made up of immigrants,¹⁶ and they also account for one out of four health-care sector workers.¹⁷

This certainly does not exclude BC. Approximately 48.9% of the population in the Metro Vancouver area self-identify as visible minorities.¹⁸ This shows a great possibility that an average citizen in Metro Vancouver has personal relationships with immigrants. They are the people that residents of Metro Vancouver care about.

Yet, when immigrants want to contribute politically, there is no avenue available in any Canadian political system via voting. Immigrants face a different degree of the law, unlike your everyday citizen, who received status by birth from a democratic system that welcomed their productivity but not expression.

Motion B109,¹⁹ which allows Permanent Residents the right to vote in municipal elections, was passed at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Conference in 2019. Then, the Province of British Columbia

issued a response seeking a deeper understanding of “the legal and constitutional implications of any proposed changes.”²⁰ Since then, any further conversations from exploring the implication of these changes has not been initiated by the Province. It has been two years, and as our society moves toward being more just and equitable with motivations inspired by the pandemic, it is imperative to answer the call of the resolution.

The purpose of this policy brief is to start the conversation and bring the possible legal and constitutional implications to the surface. Through the analysis of these implications, this policy brief recommends that Permanent Residents receive municipal voting eligibility after living in Canada continuously for 12 months.

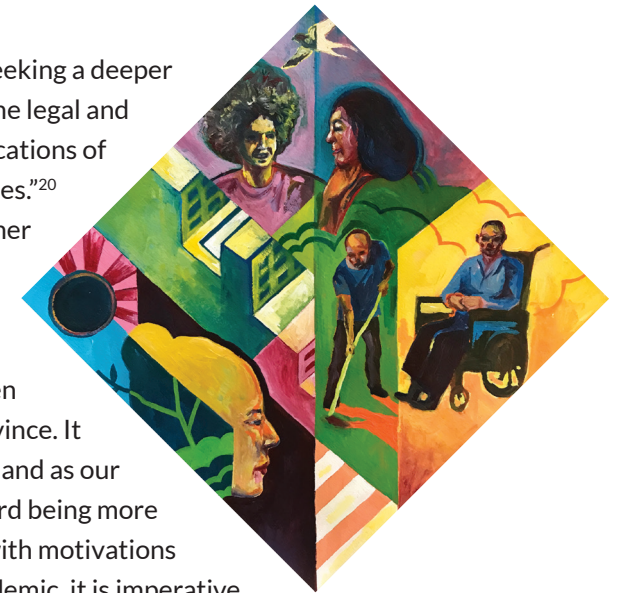
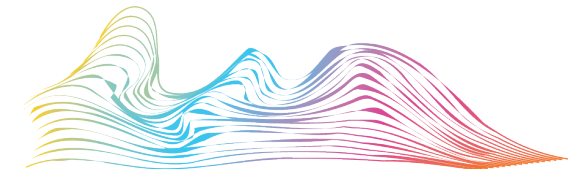


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Yaimel López



This policy brief recommends that Permanent Residents receive municipal voting eligibility after living in Canada continuously for 12 months along with any other qualifications that British Columbia imposes upon citizens.

Élie Lubendo

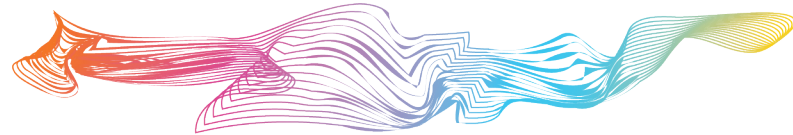
WALK ON 3D: PAVING OVER INEQUITIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH 3D-PRINTED SIDEWALKS



Élie is a former refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who fled the Second Congo War in 1998, and has called Canada home ever since.

Élie's involvement with public policy began at McGill University, where he did his undergraduate studies in Labour Relations Management (Bachelor of Commerce). Élie is currently serving his second term on the City of Burnaby's Social Planning Committee where he pushed Burnaby City Council to proclaim the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent. He also serves as the Vice-Chair of the Anti-Racism Subcommittee of the Social Planning Committee.

Élie is a passionate advocate of racial equity, community engagement, and transportation, who loves engaging with new projects and ideas that allow him to learn more about his community and how to meet their needs.



Executive Summary

Who pays the ultimate price when infrastructure costs are deferred? When capital projects favour property owners and affluent neighbourhoods, what happens to low-income residents who must make do with insufficient investments in their communities?

This policy proposal aims to study the relationship between inadequate infrastructure, urban planning, and the decision-making processes and funding formulas that create disparaging outcomes for low-income residents in the City of Burnaby—and what can be done about it.

On the surface, Burnaby is doing better than most cities when it comes to building infrastructure and community amenities. Financially, Burnaby is the healthiest municipality in British Columbia. With a population of around 250,000 people, the city boasts over \$1 billion in cash reserves.²¹ Thanks to the SkyTrain primarily running through the city, Burnaby also has the best public transportation network in Metro Vancouver and has recently funded replacements for key community amenities, including a \$250 million community centre²² and library, measured at 200,000 square feet.

Although Burnaby is a regional leader in infrastructure and community amenities, at a closer look, Burnaby, which was named Canada's best-run city by Maclean's inaugural surveys of Canadian municipalities in 2009,²³ has a troubling and persistent sidewalk problem.

Even in town centres like Edmonds, there is a lack of sidewalks due to the power that property owners have in deciding whether sidewalks can be built on their streets. This has resulted in years and years of roadside memorials that have resounded throughout

the community, including the recent death of a 14-year-old girl killed by a dump truck in May 2022.²⁴

As a result, sidewalks have become a public safety and campaign issue. Although Burnaby has made progress in addressing this infrastructure gap in recent years, there is a lot more that can be done. With the capabilities of emerging technologies like 3D printing, Burnaby is positioned to tackle this issue head-on. This policy proposal will explore and suggest how Burnaby can leverage 3D printing to create better sidewalks, while making the necessary policy changes to ensure that this tragic problem finally comes to an end.



ILLUSTRATION
Yaimel López



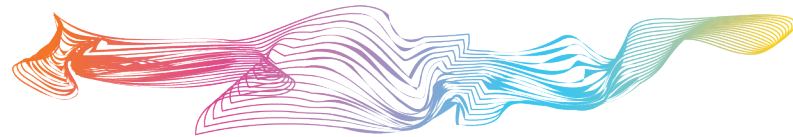
With the capabilities of emerging technologies like 3D printing, Burnaby is positioned to tackle this issue head-on.

Jimmy Ho

NAVIGATING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS: A RICHMOND PERSPECTIVE



Born in Taiwan, Jimmy immigrated to Canada at a young age and settled on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam) people, where the city of Richmond is located. Having studied Sociology with a minor in Law and Society at the University of British Columbia (UBC), he appreciates the importance of using a multidisciplinary lens for problem-solving and practicing good philosophy as a means to introspection. An avid volunteer in the Richmond community, Jimmy's goal in the LEVEL YPP program is to develop as a catalyst for meaningful change and as an amplifier of voices.



Executive Summary

Municipal governments play an active role in affordable housing policy in Canada through the use of zoning and land-use policies, or the use of city-owned land.

Cities have the policy tools to waive development fees, make tax exemptions, or streamline the approval process that can create incentives for building more affordable housing. However, what municipal governments lack is the financial power and means of taxation, with property taxes being one of the few means to generate financial capital. In turn, municipal housing policy powers are determined by the provincial government that may intervene when a municipal government is struggling with building affordable housing, or create new legislation to expand or retract municipal government powers. The federal government has the power to set mortgage rules and make a national housing strategy, with the latter being able to work directly with governments to provide funding attached with conditions to meet their objectives. Both provincial and federal governments are responsible for providing funding for housing. This is emphasized as being part of the overall solution to the affordable housing crisis, although how Indigenous Nations can be a part in this cooperation is often vague, if addressed at all.

Affordable housing concerns can be diverse depending on one's circumstances, either for immediate or long-term need. Typical examples include, but are not limited to, saving up for mortgage down payment for first-time homeowners, paying for basic needs after rent and utility bills are covered, worrying about inflation and the cost of living increasing faster than the income earned, and losing one's means of income due to unforeseen events (like the

loss of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Through these examples, it seems fair to say many of us view housing affordability solutions as essentially about building more homes and reducing the cost of housing for purchase or rent. This view is closely tied to economic and financial principles where the bottom line is about development and funding, and that market forces of supply and demand on real estate are constantly at play resulting in housing becoming unaffordable. Yet, we can no longer afford to confine affordable housing policy into such a narrow scope if we truly seek long-term, sustainable solutions that work for everyone, not just our own individual needs. If we look over the aforementioned examples again, housing policy can also be viewed as very complex and intertwined with other policies like sustainable urban and rural planning, minimum wage, food security, access to public health, social services, and poverty reduction, to name a few. Thus, I also turned my attention toward housing through a human-rights lens and housing as a social determinant of health in order to explore housing policies in ways that can empower the voices of youth and of the most vulnerable groups in our communities. It is important to note that these are not new or fresh perspectives because proponents of supportive housing programs and social housing have

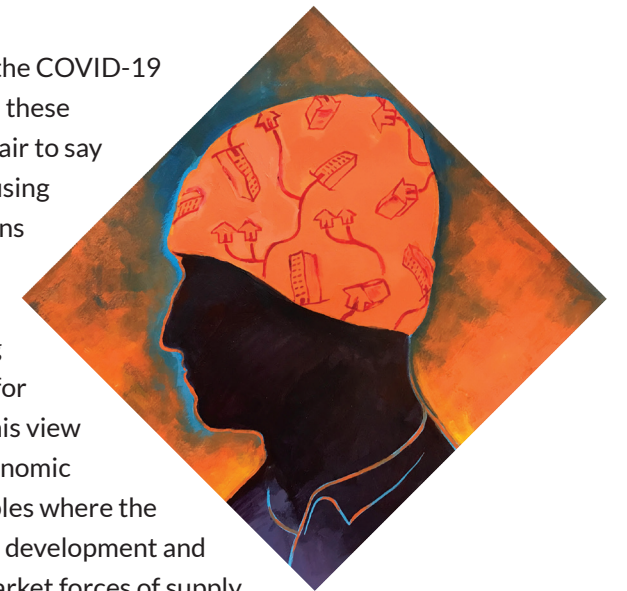


ILLUSTRATION
Yaimel López

already been advocating for such principles, and their work will be acknowledged as I refer to case studies involving these principles.

Under the municipal, provincial, and federal strategies to address affordable housing and homelessness, the most vulnerable groups in our communities are generally recognized as including Indigenous peoples, people with mental health or addictions issues, youth aging out of care, seniors, veterans, LGBTQ2S+, people with disabilities, new immigrants, single-parent families, women and children fleeing family violence, and people experiencing precarious housing or homelessness. To critically examine how these strategies effectively or ineffectively serve the needs of the most vulnerable, I will first map out their roles and responsibilities at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. Next, I will review specific policy gaps that the City of Richmond, the BC New Democratic Party (NDP) government, and the Federal Liberal government may have, which directly or indirectly relate to affordable housing and homelessness. Altogether, these analyses will serve as a basic introduction to the mainstream debate on affordable housing policies and solutions, and will be my attempt at creating a foundation to further understand where affordable housing policies currently are in Canada.

Due to the vast wealth of research on affordable housing and homelessness policies that already exists, locally and internationally, I aim only to draw on relevant information to inform the discussion and policy recommendations in the context of BC and the City of Richmond's affordable housing and homelessness strategies. I will make the following recommendations:

1. Re-define the Low End of Market Rental (LEMR) to include greater affordability below market rate and increase the percentage of LEMR contributions to a greater level (~ 30% to 50%) for private developers within the timeline of the Affordable Housing Strategy.
2. Diversify Affordable Housing funding streams to reduce reliance on cash-in-lieu contributions.
3. Include the social determinant of health as a part of both Affordable Housing and Homelessness strategies.
4. Incorporate youth-led or youth-oriented strategies into both Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategic Direction 5 on advocacy, awareness, and education roles.
5. Seek to establish Indigenous-led partnerships, particularly with the Musqueam First Nation, as a new strategic direction in both the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy, respectively.
6. Establish Community Land Trust for building non-market housing and/or housing reserved for the most vulnerable groups.

Overall, the aim of this policy brief is to shift the focus of discussion of solutions and actions in Richmond beyond the microscopic lens, one dominated by economics and finance, to a more macroscopic lens to show where the gaps in discourse and policies are. A well-defined macroscopic lens combined with a human-rights and a social determinant of health approach, will enable more effective participation by youth, Indigenous, and the most vulnerable voices in Richmond in contributing toward the City of Richmond's Affordable Housing and Homelessness strategies.



“It is so important to have Indigenous and racialized newcomers' voices in the conversations about public policy. We are all public policy analysts, know that what you have and what you bring to the table is more than enough.”

—Youth Policy Program
Past Participant

Endnotes

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Notes

Illustrators

Jessica Joseph

Jessica Joseph is a contemporary formline artist. Born and raised in Victoria, BC on Songhees Nations Reserve. She is passionate about community engaged practice and building strong and sustainable relationships; grounded in lək'wəŋən ways of knowing, being and doing. She is dedicated to lifelong learning through art and creating inspiring work for future generations.

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semillites hernández velasco

semillites hernández velasco (he/him) is a trans and brown visual artist based in vancouver, on the unceded territory of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam Nations. semillites was born in mexico city in 1995 and he comes from a family of campesinos (peasants) in central méxico. at the age of nineteen he immigrated north. semillites' artwork aims to be imperfect, trans, sincere, with a deep love for colors and collective work. semillites' media range from drawing, board games and animated gifs. his artworks are love letters to himself, his ancestors and every person and flower that has ever crossed his path.

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Yaimel López Zaldívar (Havana, 1983)

Yaimel is a Cuban graphic artist specialized in drawing, using either analogical and digital media. With more than 10 years of experience in graphic design, his work has been published in magazines and books. His professional projection includes editorial design, motion graphics, and branding. He has been based in Vancouver since May 2019, where he works as an artist and graphic designer. He has collaborated with Watari, Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Vancouver Latin-American Cultural Centre (VLACC), and Vancouver Film Festival (VLAFF). He has taken part in several group and personal exhibitions.

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*"Where do you begin
telling someone their world
is not the only one?"*

*—Lee Maracle (2017). Ravensong: A Novel,
p.61, Canadian Scholars' Press.*

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