



## Arts Based Inquiry in Evaluation: Co-creating knowledge

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## Community-Based Participatory Research



<http://www.nicolasblain.com/#solidarit>  
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## Learning Objectives

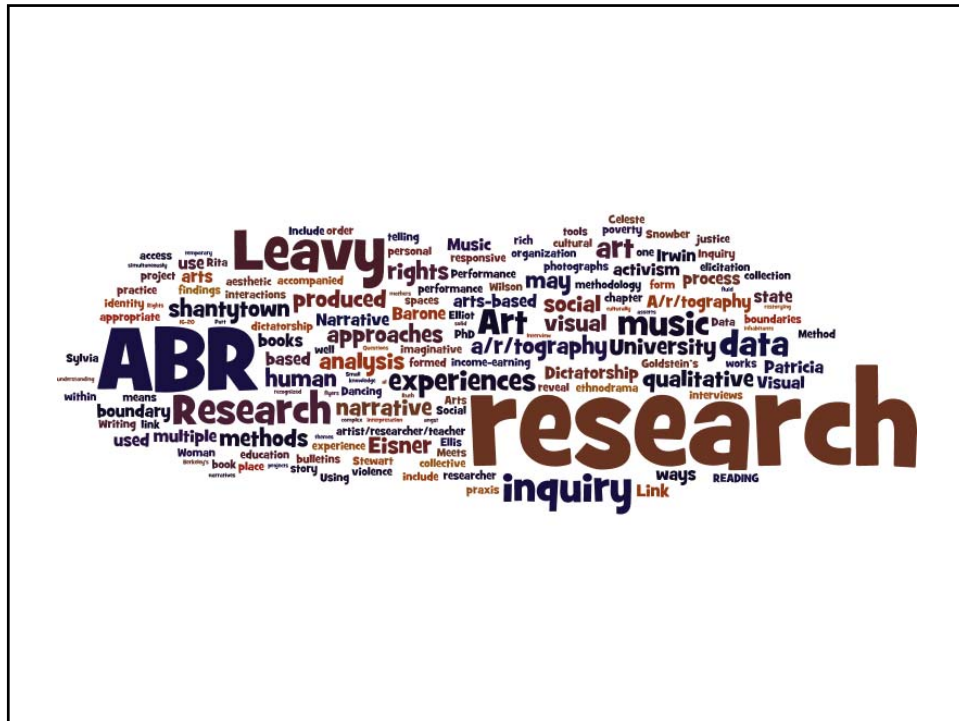
- Provide an introduction to arts-based inquiry (research/evaluation)
- Share examples of how art can be used to engage stakeholders/participants in evaluation
- Describe two projects where we have used arts based strategies to collect, analyze, and represent findings

**How are you feeling about  
evaluation right now?**

**Answer this question by drawing  
an image or symbol**



What is Arts-Based Inquiry?



## A *Very* Brief History of Arts-Based Inquiry: Some Highlights

- 1970s set the stage: Major shift in paradigm. We continued to challenge positivism

“By calling upon artful ways of knowing and being in the world, arts-based researchers make a rather *audacious challenge* to the dominant, entrenched academic community and its claims to scientific ways of knowing”

(Finlay, 2008, p. 71 in ARB handbook Faulkner, p. 33)



- Dominant ways of thinking tells us numbers = truth = power

Image: <https://education.wsu.edu/susan-finley/>

## 1970 - 1990s: Creative Art Therapy paved the way

We started to see how powerful and effective it is to use art forms (e.g., painting, drawing, dance, music) as therapy



## 1980 - 1990s: Elliot Eisner, early champion of ABR

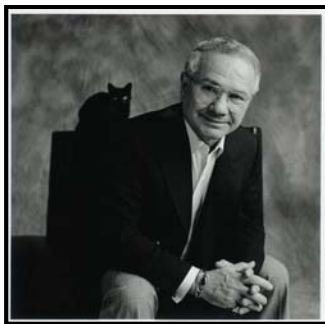


Image: <https://gs100.stanford.edu/stories/elliott-eisner-my-teacher?src=more>

- Encouraged social scientists to appreciate and understand artistic way of knowing
- Taught us how artistic ways of knowing can complement science
- Paved the way for ABR approaches to be accepted in graduate work (e.g., dissertations written in novel form)
- Envisioned how we can use music, dance, and poetry, etc. to represent our research findings (Eisner, 1981, 1998)

### Arts-informed inquiry as a methodological enhancement for evaluation

- Fulfills a need
- Responds to different kinds of questions
- Provides different forms of engagement when collecting data
- Keeps the end in mind
- Fuses theory and practice and creativity
- Attends to diversity



Process

Product

Searle & Shulha (2016)

### Why use Arts-Based approaches in Evaluation?

1. To expand our ability to see, consider, and interpret our social world in a meaningful, exciting, and engaging way!
2. Make research and evaluation more accessible and consumable by communicating beyond the academy, funder, and final report; to share findings with a variety of audiences
3. Tool for social justice, social awareness, or political change; demonstrate humanity, show multiple truths, challenge stereotypes

## ABI captures different arts mediums that can be used as.....

- A tool for stakeholder engagement
- A tool for planning and design
- A source of data
- An approach to analysis
- A method for presentation of data

## **ART-FORMS WITHIN ARTS-BASED INQUIRY**

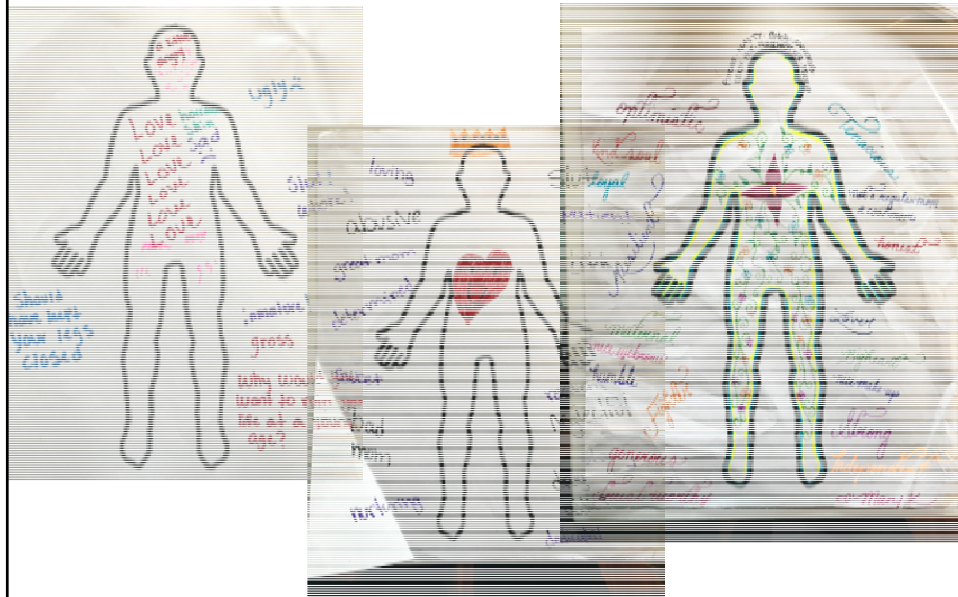
Fiction, Poetry, Music / Sound, Dance, Playbuilding, Digital  
and Visual Participatory Research, Participatory Film and  
Video Making, Collage, and Quilting

# Collage





## Visual Representation



## Journey Maps

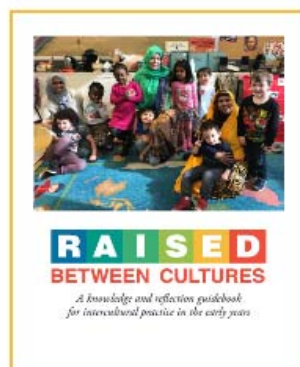




## Drawing

## Documentary film

RAISED Between  
Cultures



Bureaucrazy



<http://www.familiesfirstedmonton.ualberta.ca/use-research-now/collaboration-partnership#impDVD654>

## Arts Inquiry in Evaluation

### Use:

Generates data which  
can be used at multiple  
levels and  
in diverse ways.

### Methods:

Relevant when  
studying  
experiences that  
are difficult  
to verbalize.



### Value:

Brings people  
together around a  
common purpose  
to connect,  
to identify  
challenges, and  
to celebrate.

## Successful Families



### ISSUE

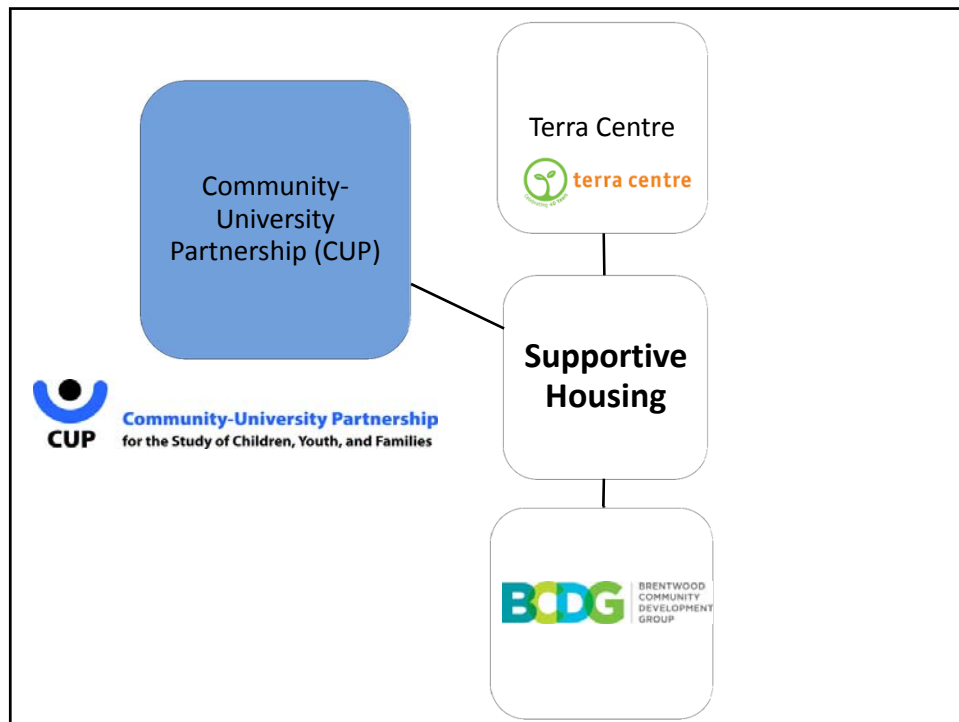
- Teen families struggle to secure safe and affordable housing and supports, placing them at risk of homelessness

### SOLUTION

- Develop and study a supportive housing model for teen families

### APPROACH

- Community-based participatory approach (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003)
- Developmental Evaluation
- Multiple Methods



## Supportive Housing



*"Supportive Housing combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs."*

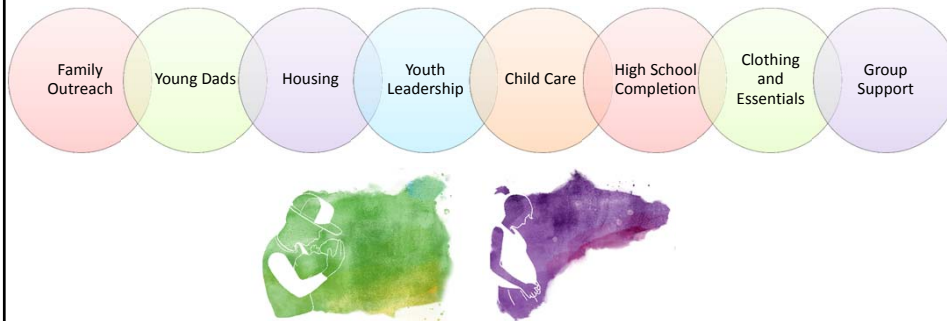
- The Homeless Hub

## Evaluation Purpose



To **build** and **refine** a model of supportive housing for teen families and explore the **impact** on the children.

## Terra Centre



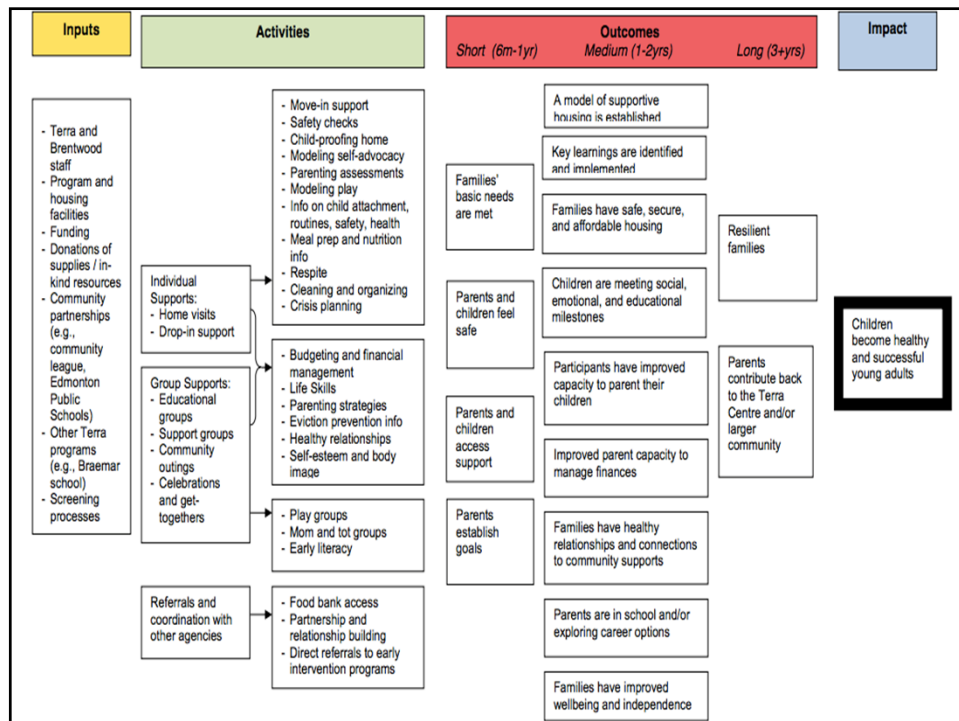
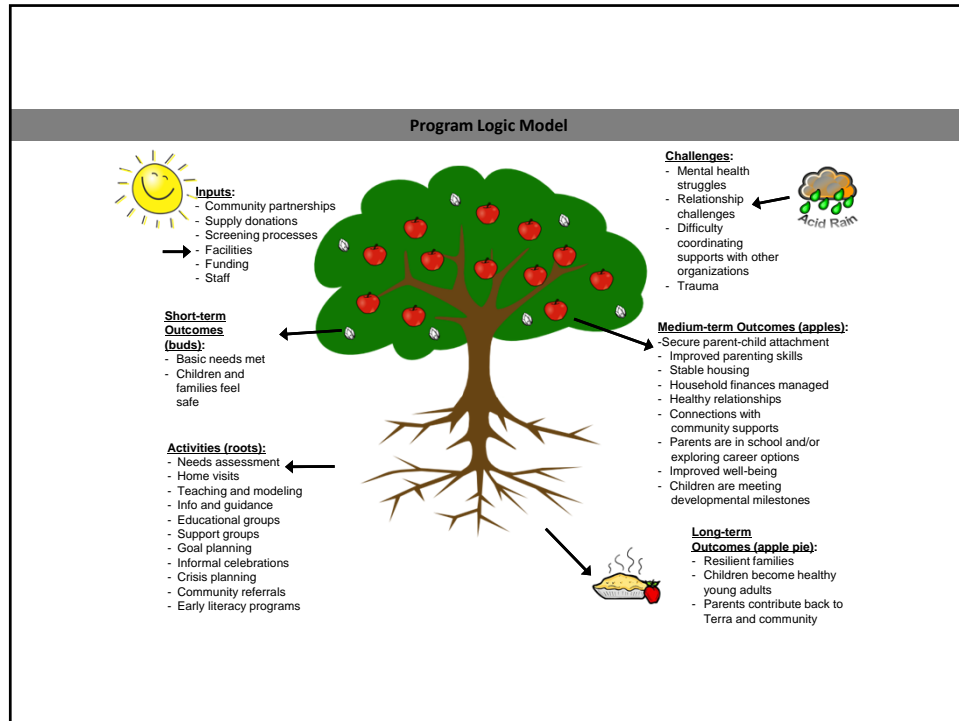


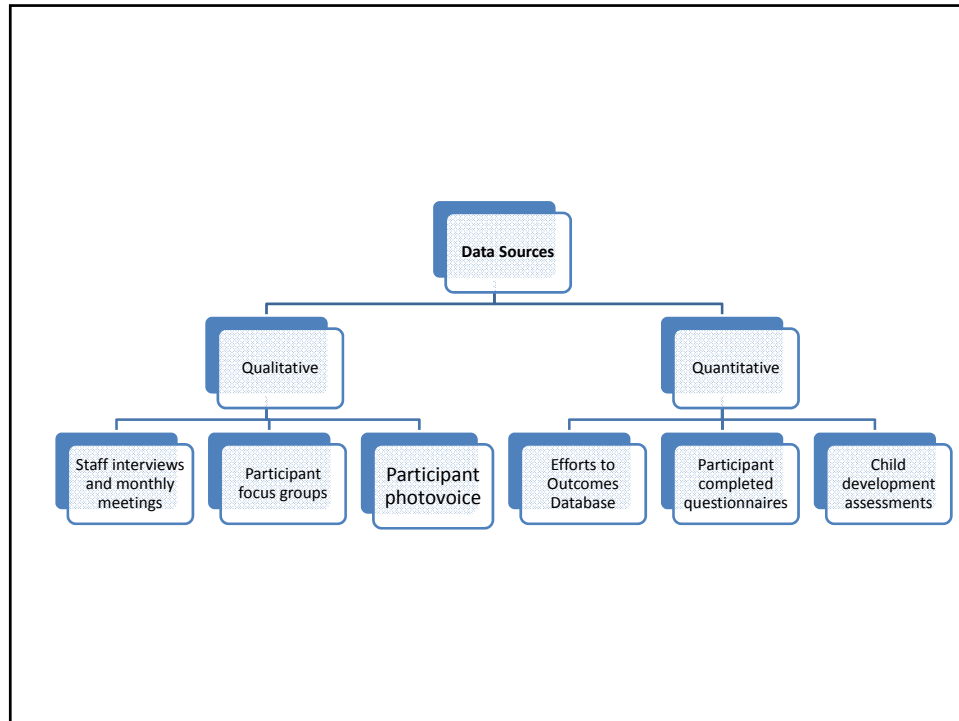
## Brentwood community development group



## SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES program







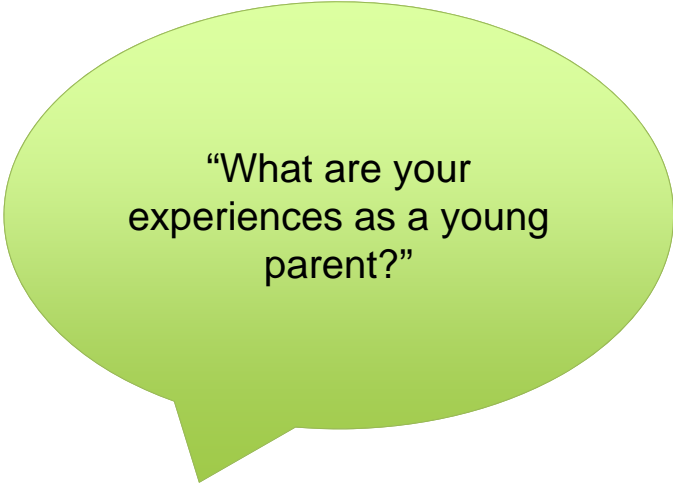
## Photovoice

Involves a group of community members taking photos in response to an issue of importance to the community

(Wang & Burris, 1997).







“What are your  
experiences as a young  
parent?”



Stigma



Stability



Connection

“As young mothers we’re often **worried about what people think** about us when they hear our kids screaming... I think subconsciously we’re always worried about what the neighbours think. And then you’re just always **policing your child’s behaviour** in a way so that no-one can call children’s services.”

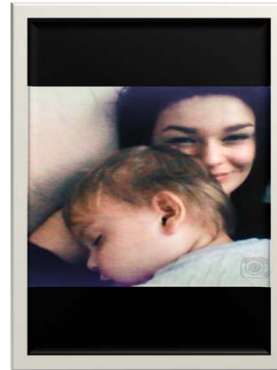


“Your **friendships change** when you have a kid. Your friends without kids don’t want to hang out anymore so you need to have friends that have their own kids.”


“This picture represents the friends I have made with other moms and their kids [while living at Brentwood]. As a result of these friendships and connections **I feel a part of the community...**”

"The most important part for me is **stabilization and integration** in the community. Stabilization not just of housing, but of routine. So you need to come to group, have a day program, pay your bills."

"If you live here, you need to make sure you're living a clean lifestyle... It gives people who might not know how to live responsibly the **opportunity to learn...**"



"This was a special day for [my son] and I since it was **celebrated in our first home together** with friends and family. What matters to me as a parent is having a home where we can celebrate every holiday together so my son knows **stability in his life.**"



**Honourable Lori Sigurdson (NDP)**  
**MLA for Edmonton-Riverview**  
 Current Member 0875

[Contact Information](#)  
[Biography](#)  
[Expense Disclosure Reports](#)  
[Profile](#)  
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Courtesy of Legislative Assembly of Alberta


You Are Invited to a

## PHOTOVOICE EXHIBIT

Successful Families participants have captured powerful photos that reflect what is important to them as


**MLA Biography**

**Minister of Seniors and Housing**



**Research Project Gives**


The Successful Families program, offered in partnership by Terra and Brentwood Community Development Group, provides safe, supported and affordable housing for teen families in Edmonton. Currently, 25 families are involved in the program, where they develop skills to maintain long-term tenancies, reduce social isolation and build parenting confidence. Successful Families is facilitated by four Terra housing support staff who operate out of




**VIDEO | City hall photo exhibit aims to break stereotypes of teen parents**

There is a lot of judgement, especially from older moms, thinking that we're not good moms"


By Robynne Dill, News Host on 10/10/2017 at 6:45 PM | Last updated on 10/10/2017 at 6:45 PM




**Community-University Partnership  
CUP**  
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## First Nation Child Development (FNCD) Project




Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

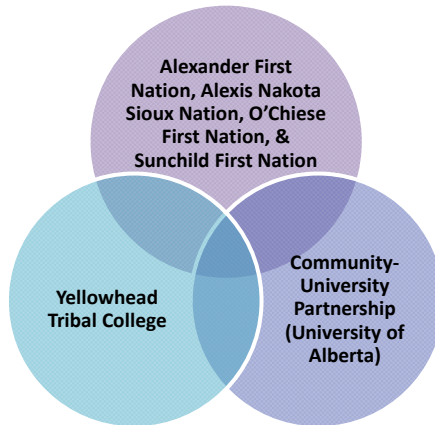


Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada





## The First Nation Child Development Project

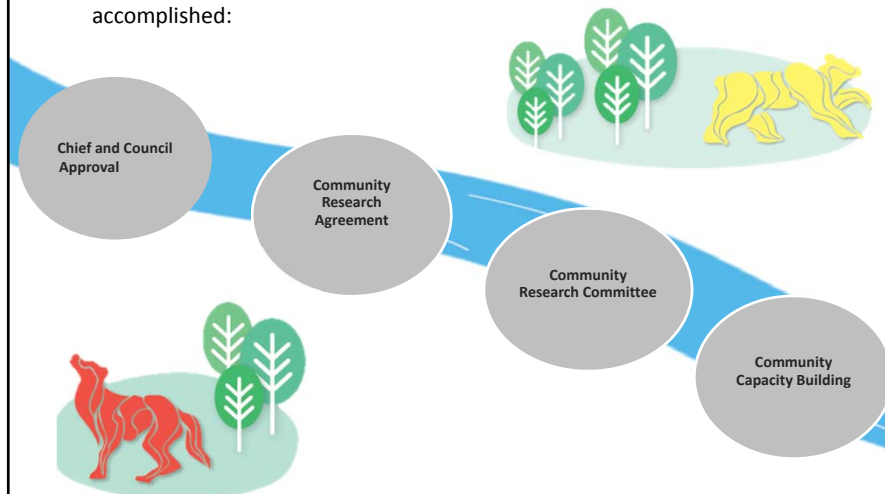


### Four-year project to:

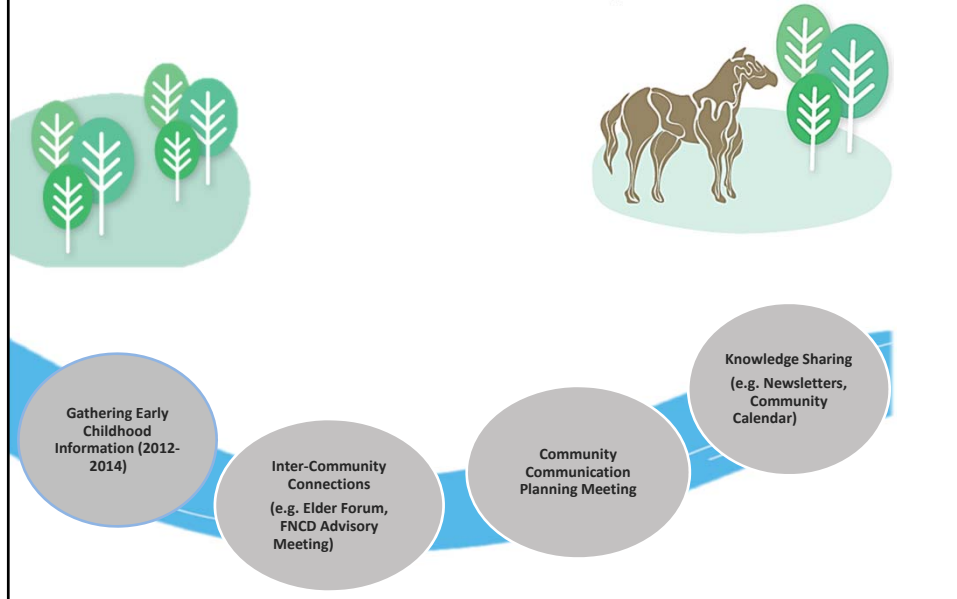
- Gather information on the development of 4 and 5 year old children using the Early Development Instrument (EDI; Janus & Offord, 2007)
- Gather community perspectives on child development through focus groups with youth, adults, and Elders
- Develop a First Nation Child Development supplement to the EDI that reflects the unique knowledge and cultural values of participating First Nation communities
- Share project findings with communities for community-directed action planning

## The Journey

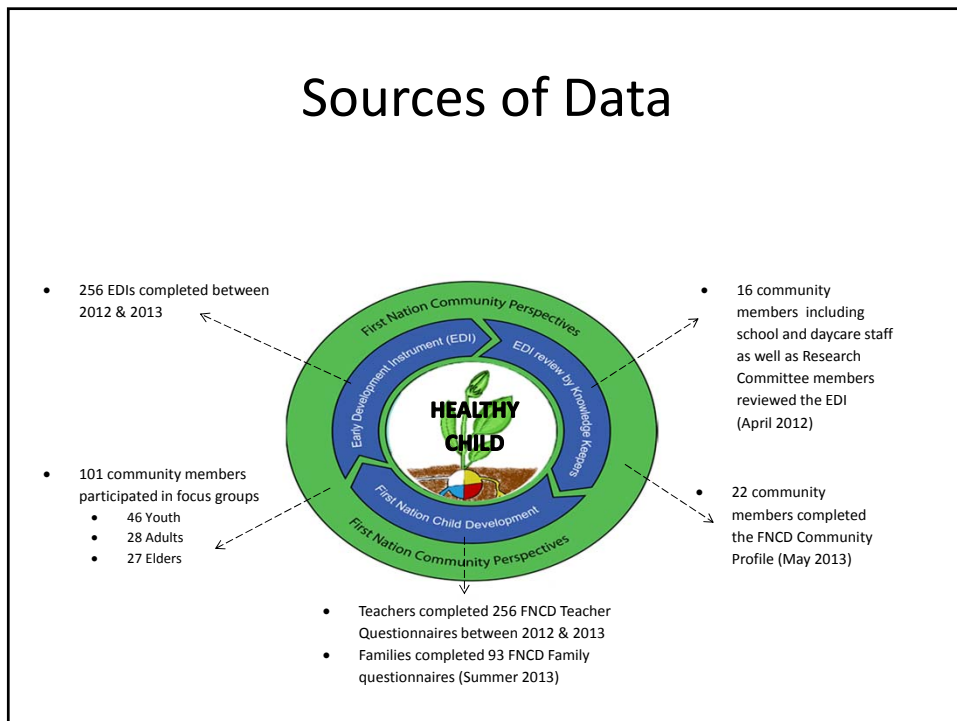
- Throughout the project many key activities were accomplished:



## The Journey



## Sources of Data

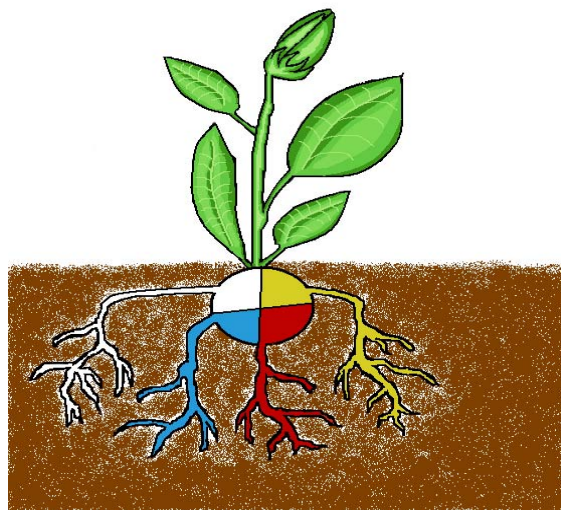




## A Collective Perspective on Early Childhood Development

Focus groups were conducted with 46 youth (ages 16-18), 28 adults, and 25 Elders across all communities. . The community conversations helped describe healthy childhood development from the perspective of the four First Nation communities:

*“Every child has a framework [of development] consisting of what they pick up from their parents when they are born. Their main body is the main part of the tree or the plant. The roots stem out as they learn. The learning part of it is the roots. And the survival part is with the roots too because they consist of giving the body of the child the development from the roots. Once the plant or tree grows that’s how they blossom in life. And their mind is developed through the knowledge they gather and the more branches they put up and knowledge they gather. You have to respect the water because the root is feeding off the water in the ground and the nutrition it gets from the ground. Same as we feed our children with information so they can grow” - Elder*



*"Teach them that you love them, that you care, that you are always there for her. That way makes them strong." Elder*

*"I try to instill in her to be proud of the woman she is going to grow up to be and show her to be more proud of being Native culture, because that's what our identity is, mainly our culture. That's what makes us who we are." Adult*

*"But the grandmothers used to sit us down and talk to us, right when you grow up, when you're a mom, they used to tell us all those things how to take care of ourselves." Adult*

*"And being pregnant is sacred and children are gifts." Elder*

*"[love] for the plants and other things that grow; for the animals, it's a source of information that you get from mother earth... The nutrition you develop from the root system, the sweet grass grows from the ground..." Elder*

*"I find that language is very important...that's the root of the strength, I believe, for identity and understanding, the cultural component." Elder*

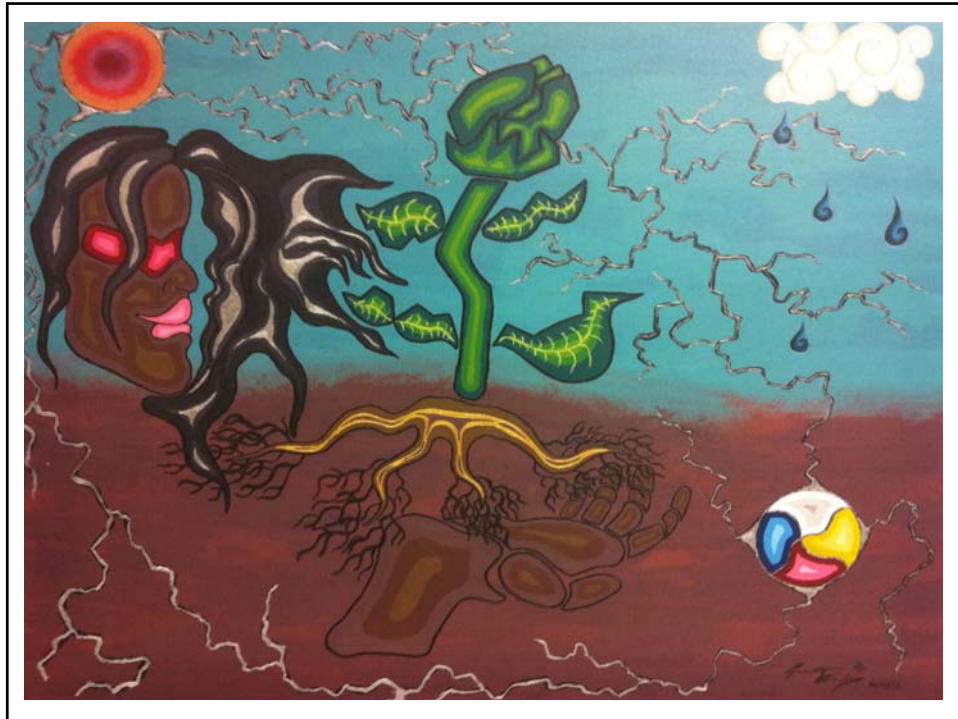
*"That's kind of a downside, personally I wish I knew my language or my culture more. The age I am I should but really I don't, and it's kind of hard when my kid asks me certain things and I can't help. Here they learn the language and whatever and at home I try to encourage him to count or say their animals but it's kind of hard when he comes to me and I can't." Adult*

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7

## A Student's Inspiration







## Things to Consider

- Ethics
  - Confidentiality
  - Identification/Anonymity
  - Knowledge Sharing/Dissemination
- Not appropriate for all contexts, ages, participants
- What if good research gets transformed into bad art?
- Should researchers have training in photography to work with photographs? Training in collage to develop a collage? Take a visual fundamentals course? Is there any danger in using art to gather or communicate data when you are unaware of its foundations?

## Remembering the “Why”



## References and Resources

### Articles:

- Barone, T., & Eisner E. W. (2011). In T. Barone & E. W. Eisner (Eds.), *What is and What Is Not Arts Based Research?* (p. 1–12). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Knowle, J.G. & Cole, A. L. (20
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Simons, H., & McCormack, B. (2007). Integrating arts-based inquiry in evaluation methodology. *Qualitative Inquire*, 13 (2), 292-311.

### Websites:

- <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en>
- <http://michellesear14.wixsite.com/alternative-qual/introduction> (Dr. Michelle Searle)
- <https://exchange.youthrex.com/toolkit>

### Toolkits:

- [http://www.ascevaluation.ca/Documents/Toolkits/GOAL\\_ArtBasedEvaluation.pdf](http://www.ascevaluation.ca/Documents/Toolkits/GOAL_ArtBasedEvaluation.pdf)