IRIS Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society
Institut de recherche et de développement sur l'intégration et la société

Access to Justice for Indigenous and Racialized Victims and Survivors of Crime with Intellectual, Psychosocial and Cognitive Disabilities

Phase II: Community Safe House:

Prevention and Promotion of Responsive Legal and Justice Systems

Phase I
2017-2019

What did we accomplish?

Convened non-traditional dialogues with Indigenous, racialized, migrant people with disabilities (GBA+ focused) who are vulnerable to victimization, with victim service providers in local sites

Shared experiences, learned about commonalities and differences in accessing justice services

This led to the establishment of Local Safety & Inclusion Networks (LSIN) driven and led by grassroots, front-line workers with and of these populations

Networks organized and held access to justice workshops to isolated marginalized people to share information, hear about their needs and engage in designing interventions

LSIN arrived at a common understanding of what needs to be done to set the foundation for ongoing, systemic change in the justice system.

focus ⇨ most vulnerable people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities

- Those who live in poverty
- GBA+ lens ⇨ women, especial Trans women and gender non-conforming people
- Black, racialized: colonial racism, poverty
- Indigenous: historical trauma, poverty
- Refugees fleeing conflict: loss, trauma, poverty
- Living with mental health and addictions, FASD

activities

- Establish national and local project teams
- Develop and implemented regular evaluation discussions with project leads from 6 cities ⇨ national meetings
- Self-completion questionnaires for workshops
- Shared our work internationally in Birmingham, UK May 2018

Focus group key findings

PROBLEMS

(1) Negative treatment and practices by people who work in the justice system:

- Racism:
- Unnecessary use of force and racism:
- Poor treatment by the police:
- Fear justice actors will take away their children

(2) Families/friends/workers cannot deal with the persons with mental health disability and/or intellectual disabilities at home, schools and in support services

(3) Lack of trust, fear and not supported when engaging with justice system processes:

(4) People do not reach out for help due to shame and fear of reactions from community, friends and family

Focus group key findings

WHAT PEOPLE NEED

1) Medical treatment
2) More wrap around, holistic supports for individuals and families
3) Housing with supports and options
4) Alternative systems of justice – First Nations Courts, Diversion programs for people with intellectual disabilities
5) Educate people on the justice system, i.e. processes, consequences of using services, etc.
6) More resources and supports for agencies serving these populations

Focus group key findings

WHAT THE JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS:

1) Improve Policing

- Culture in police force needs to change towards each group
- De-escalation practices
- More accountability in the police system.
- Repercussions for false testimony by police.
- Mandatory use of body cameras
- Take guns away from police
- Police need to be educated
- Empathy and listening training for police
- Training on issues of poverty
- Partner with these communities, allowing for vulnerable populations to lead

Focus group key findings

WHAT THE JUSTICE SYSTEMS NEEDS:

2) More equity in processes and practices:

- Faster legal aid processes.
- Equitable access to legal supports/lawyers
- Decision makers need to be more diverse and be better trained on equity issues
- Ways to ensure court staff are impartial
- Equitable sentencing for similar crimes
- Fair treatment and options for mediation between black and white
- Strengthened complaint systems to ensure accountability in the system

focus group key findings

WHAT THE JUSTICE SYSTEMS NEEDS:

3. Improve Prison and Remand Services
4. ‘Cultural competency’ or Anti-Oppression training
5. Mental Health Court Diversions programs whenever possible.
6. Culturally appropriate responses and deeper supports for refugees in domestic violence processes.
7. Understand Structural Oppression
8. Priority needs to be keeping families together

Key learning

The Key Problem

There is this tension between law enforcement not equipped nor their job to be dealing with people with psychosocial, intellectual disabilities in times of crisis, and yet the supports in the community do not exist for people with these disabilities when in crisis situations.

Key Solution

Preventative interventions, increase population specific, community-base supports to divert entry or extensive engagement with the justice system

Phase II: implementing interventions

- Each LSIN network decided what needs to be done next.
- Local strategies fit with Federal “It’s Time” strategy pillars of Prevention and Promotion of responsive legal and justice system
- Key learning from Phase I ⇨ to effectively address the issue of preventative measures and increased access to justice services for these populations, we need to focus on community-based solutions.

Phase II: Justice Project for People with Disabilities

1. Legal Research on needed reforms in criminal law to enable interpretive evidence of abuse of people with significant intellectual, cognitive and psychosocial disabilities – Legal Capacity work, continue.
2. Implementing Community-Based Access to Justice Pilot Projects as identified by the community sites

Preventative/Diversion Ideas	Pilot Activities	Identified in …
Establish neighbourhood 'Situation Tables' or 'Focus Tables' or 'Caring Circles'	❑ Define what these are ❑ Whose involved ❑ What neighbourhoods ❑ Secure resources to sustain these tables	✓ Charlottetown ✓ Toronto ✓ Saint John
Establish a Community Safe House ⇨ divert police interactions and offer an alternative to hospital emergency use and jails	❑ Community Design Workshop – programming & social architecture ❑ Secure land/property and resources ❑ Implement building process	✓ Vancouver ✓ Winnipeg
Develop local grassroot community support network to activate key agencies at times of crisis and/or the Caring Circles 24/7	❑ Convene key groups/individuals ❑ Establish Caring Circles ❑ Establish Women's Community House ❑ Secure resources to sustain this	✓ Charlottetown ✓ Toronto ✓ Vancouver ✓ Winnipeg ✓ Saint John
Work with mainstream services to: **a) Develop a registry process for first responders that will alert them to 'Care Plans'** **b) Establish Quiet Rooms in hospitals** **c) Establish Patient Advocacy/Legal Rights Advisors in hospitals** **d) Anti-oppression training** **e) Complaints mechanisms in group homes and institutions**	❑ Establish the local network ❑ Bring in mainstream players work with network ❑ Develop training materials ❑ Work with mainstream services to develop policies/programs ❑ Secure resources to sustain these changes	✓ Charlottetown ✓ Toronto ✓ Saint John
Population specific work with survivors and families including men, women and their families to combat GBV	❑ Hold Warriors Against Violence Family Healing Train-the-Trainer with Indigenous nations in Atlantic, Prairie and Greater Toronto Region ❑ Adapt WAVS approach for migrant, African Canadian and other racialized populations	✓ Charlottetown ✓ Toronto ✓ Saint John ✓ Winnipeg ✓ Regina

Phase II: Activities

Activity 1: Research & Community Consultation ⇨Reconvene local networks and conduct focus groups and key informant interviews with victim service providers and the target populations.

Activity 2: Community Design Workshops ⇨ Using the results of the research, hold two-day workshops with key stakeholders, privileging victims and survivors to lead in the program design of the Community Safe House.

Activity 3: Develop a Community-Specific Business Plan ⇨ This involves: 1) Developing a Business Plan that outlines the Safe House's organizational structure and community support process and 2) Secure funding by developing and implementing a Funding & Sustainability Plan which involves a systematic 5 step process for securing provincial, municipal and private sector funding.

Phase II is evidence-based …

The phase II plan based on findings from:

- Final report on Phase I Justice Canada project (2017-2019);
- PhD dissertation. Doris Rajan: A Pedagogy of Solidarity Indigenous, Refugee Women and Women with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities and Structural Violence (June 2019);
- IRIS secondary research project: Local Safety & Inclusion Networks – Towards a Definition (March 2020).

Effectiveness of the local to national approach

Work occurs locally ⇨ to reach people directly, where the social problems play out

Led by the people who are most effective ⇨they can best say what's wrong and what is needed to right the wrong

Led by the *marginalized of the marginalized* with a gender-based lens ⇨ if we can effectively remove some of the more complex barriers to inclusion for these populations, less complicated barriers will be easier to tackle and can benefit everybody.

Work in solidarity ⇨ see that they are part of a bigger structure of marginality. In these local networks people begin to learn about one another, develop a unified way of understanding of why they live in poverty and/or experience victimization – as they build a collective approach, voice and constituency.

Effectiveness of the local to national approach

Privilege working with front-line, population-specific workers ⇨over local mainstream providers; rather than try to fit in a system not built with their needs in mind. Start from the beginning and design what could work, based on lived knowledge

Establish important relationships⇨ bring together people who traditionally have not work together; change the approach, i.e. instead of pop-specific agencies invited to mainstream circles, mainstream actors are invited into marginalized women's circles⇨ new kind of relationships

Local to national - often effective community work begins and ends within the confines of a local geographic community; positive outcomes are trapped in these 'islands of excellence': local to national provides a framework to move learnings upward to inform policies and programs

Attack the problem at multiple levels and entry points ⇨ identify individual solutions while engaging the broader local community to examine themselves and respond to those specific needs and local learnings inform broader policies/programs

Demonstrate what works ⇨ bottom up approach. Enact the relationships and practices that would be most effective in order to build a body of evidence to push for policy and program reforms

IRIS Research (March 2020) ⇨ Local Safety & Inclusion Networks will result in successful outcomes if they adhere to the following criteria:

- ⇨ The networks are based in a local geographic community;
- ⇨ Priority is given to working with local gender-based grassroots service providers over local mainstream service providers;
- ⇨ The network is made up of grassroots community members and service providers of the most marginalized populations with a focus on women and gender minorities;
- ⇨ A local agency provides institutional support to the network activities;
- ⇨ A local organizer with a strong intersectional community network is identified to coordinate the work of the network;
- ⇨ The convening space and interactions have the necessary supports in place for diverse marginalized people to participate in an equitable manner; and
- ⇨ Awareness of the issues facing marginalized populations is communicated to the broader community.

Ideas about LSIN Structures

Anchor organizations – rooted in each marginalized population group

Lead agency – takes on coordination role; flows any funding for the network

Community leaders – formal and informal; provide advisory & connecting role

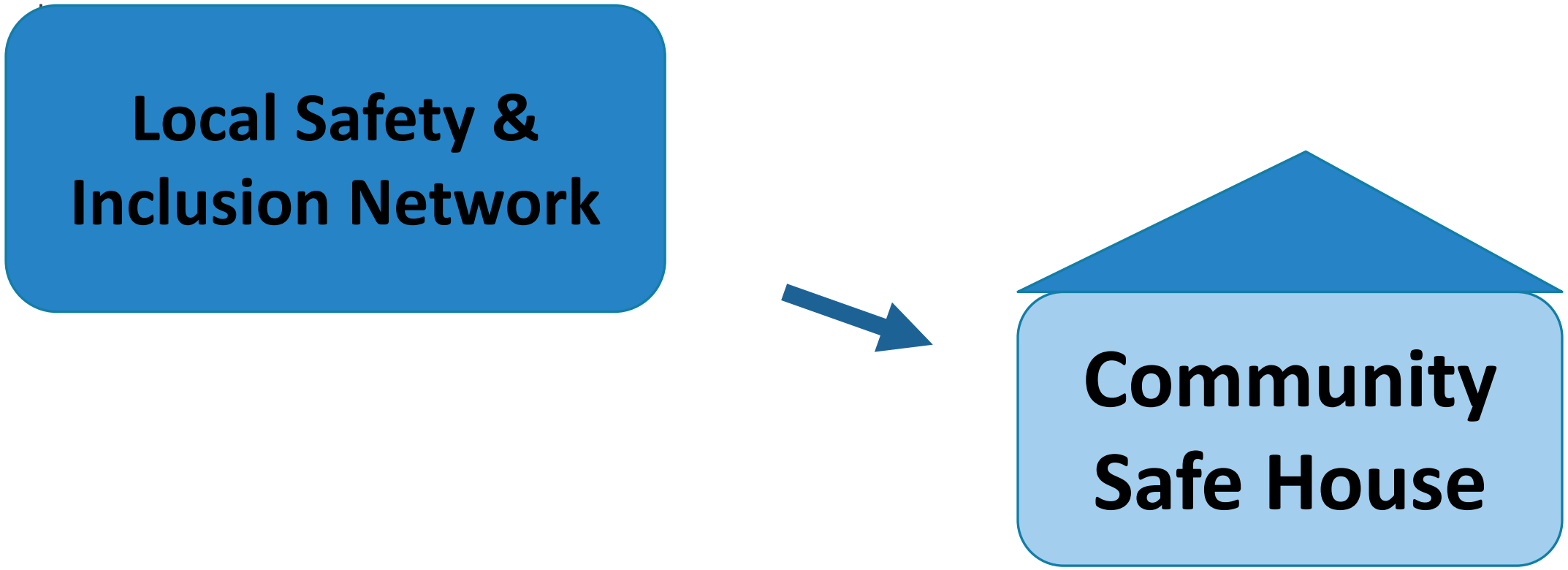
'**Shared Referral System**' – to respond to individual meet needs

Shared protocols for information sharing about individuals and responses

Outreach strategy – reaches out to create web of support for individuals

Partnerships for action – for shared work – e.g., a 'community safe house'

For example… Partnership to create a safe house



Local Safety & Inclusion Networks

IMAGINING INCLUSION: across boundaries

- Convening
- Sharing Experiences
- Coming to a common understanding

DESIGNING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

- Anchor organizations
- Leaders: formal and informal
- Build community awareness
- Build capacity of; population specific services to support each other, mainstream services and grassroots community members
- Identify policy and program gaps

ACTIVATING THE NETWORK

- Activate community, mainstream and grassroots' supports
- Transitional places
- Opportunities of community involvement

Objectives	Community Safe House Project
Increase awareness and access to services for survivors	Provides access to preventative services for victims which includes awareness raising activities.
Enhance the capacity of victim and survivor service providers	Establish Local Safety & Inclusion Networks (LSIN) in each community which would serve as the project's Steering Committee. These Networks are made up of front-line victim service providers (particularly those serving the target marginalized populations) and justice service providers, who collaboratively build a holistic web of support around victims towards the prevention and more effective response to violence and crime.
Set up and implement referral networks, partnerships, protocols, public-education projects and training	The Community Safe House's LSIN, is a network of diverse partners who would develop the Safe House's system of referrals relevant to the prevention of crime cross diverse populations and deliver public education and awareness sessions to key stakeholders.

Reflections ⇨ 2017-2019

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Inclusion International
17th World Congress | 2018

Inclusion
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VANCOUVER

1. Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
2. Vancouver Police Department
3. Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing
4. City of Vancouver – Women's Committee
5. City of Vancouver – Persons with Disabilities
6. Ending Violence Association of BC
7. Spectrum Society – Intellectual Disabilities
8. Self Advocates – Intellectual Disabilities
9. Vancouver Area Survivors of Torture
10. Downtown Eastside Womeb's Centre
11. Peer Support Program – Mental Health
12. Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre
13. Indigenous activist/artist
14. Inland Refugee Society
15. First Call
16. UBC Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship
17. Community Living BC
18. Inclusion BC
19. Multicultural Family Support Society
20. BC Society of Transition Homes
21. MOSAIC – Belong Program
22. Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
23. Watari
24. BC People First
25. Warriors Against Violence Society

1. Kennebecasis Regional Police Force
2. Saint John Police Force
3. New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council – Local 10
4. Key industries
5. Mental Health and Addictions Services Horizons Health Network
6. Sophie Recovery Centre
7. SHARE Activity Centre
8. Hestia House
9. Forum for immigrant women
10. Crescent Valley Resource Centre
11. Saint John Multicultural and Newcomers Resource Centre
12. Atlantic Human Services
13. Family Plus Counseling services
14. Domestic Violence Outreach
15. Saint Joesph's Urgent Care
16. Sexual Assault Response Team
17. Saint John Women's Empowerment Network
18. Working with Women and Children to End Cycle
19. Second Stage Safe Haven
20. AIDS Saint John
21. Teen Resource Centre

22. Gentle Path Counselling
23. Coverdale Centre for Women
24. Women and child horizons
25. Department of Social Development
26. When Communities Work Together, There are Ways to Find Solution
27. Horizons Health: Addictions and mental health network
28. ACL Employment Program
29. St Joesph's Community Health Centre, Domestic Violence Outreach

SAINT JOHN

1. Brenda Dubois -grandmother (kokum), Muscowpetung First Nation Grandmother
2. Stops to Violence
3. South Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre
4. Self Advocates – Intellectual Disabilities - 2
5. Autism Resource Centre
6. Mental Health Advocates
7. Schizophrenic Society
8. Regina Open Door Society
9. University Refugee program
10. Refugee Advocate
11. Wesley United Church, Minister, Trans
12. Trans women advocate
13. Aboriginal Home Care
14. Aboriginal Student Union

REGINA

15. Indigenous Advocate
16. Indigenous Student Advocate
17. Regina Police Services
18. University of Regina
19. YWCA
20. Domestic Violence Unit Family Service Regina
21. Status of Women Office - Saskatchewan

1. Toronto Police
2. Children’s Aid Society
3. Social Services Network
4. Vasantham- Tamil Wellness Centre
5. Riverdale Immigrant Women’s Centre
6. Community Living Toronto
7. Psychiatric Disabilities Anti-Violence Coalition
8. Empowerment Council
9. Sound Times
10. Parkdale Anti-Violence Education
11. Women’s Health in Women’s Hands
12. Assaulted Women’s Hotline
13. Massey Centre for Women
14. Black Creek Community Health Centre
15. Family Association for Mental Health
16. Healing Place
17. Across Boundaries: An Ethno-Racial Mental Health
18. Native Women’s Resource Centre
19. St. Michael’s Hospital
20. Wigwamen
21. Sistering
22. Partners for Planning - P4P

TORONTO

NATIONAL

Similarities
- Shame / culture of fear
- Isolation
- Colonization
- Patriarchy
- Capitalist system
- Commodification - people
- Control / power
- Women not empowered
- Victim blaming
- Cultural Customs
- Expectation
- Social impact

BEAR MOON

Ottawa Solidarity Symposium – December 2017