

# From Displacement to Hope: A Guide for Displaced Indigenous Communities and Host Communities

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et du Nord Canada

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NOVEMBER 02 2017



Thank you to the  
Musqueam, Squamish  
and Tsleil-Waututh First  
Nations for allowing us  
onto their un-ceded  
territory

NOVEMBER 02 2017

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# Acknowledgements

## RESEARCH PURPOSE



- foster resilience & support for Indigenous communities to become better prepared in case they have to be evacuated;
- provide guidelines and recommendations to government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the steps that can be taken to maximize support for displaced populations and minimize the negative impacts of displacement

## RESEARCH PURPOSE



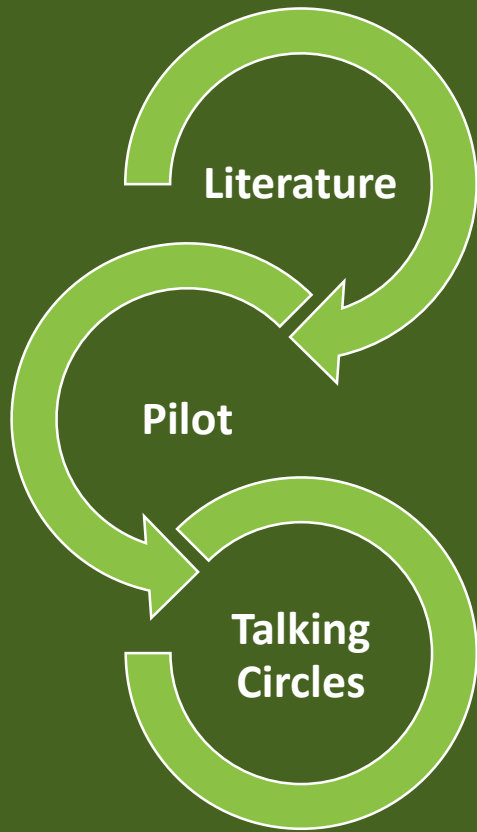
- provide host communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, with advice and recommendations on how to welcome and provide support to displaced populations until they are able to return home.

## STRUCTURE



- Indigenous Steering Committee members
- Local community liaisons
- Research team was accompanied by an Aboriginal Consultant, Robert Mills, from the Haida First Nation

## METHODS



- Literature Review
- Pilot Community: Cormorant Island
- Series of Talking Circles were held in three Indigenous communities across Canada:
  1. Eskasoni Mi'kmaw Nation, Nova Scotia
  2. Long Plain First Nation, Manitoba
  3. Kanaka Bar First Nation and Lytton First Nation, British Columbia

## METHODS



- Talking Circles included up to 12 members of First Nation communities who had either been evacuated, been on evacuation alert, or had served as a host communities to evacuated Indigenous populations.
- Each Talking Circle was organized with local community liaisons

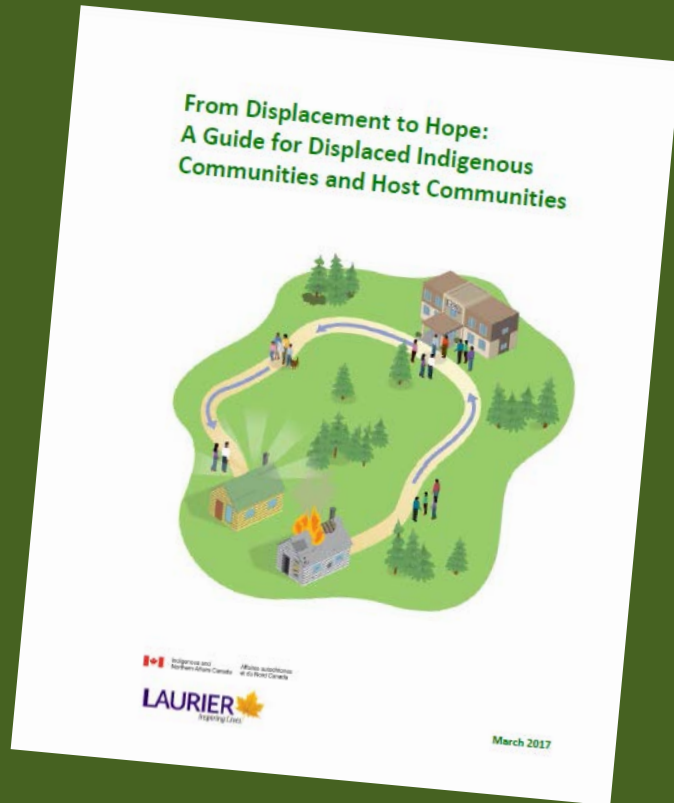


## OUTCOMES



- Following the Talking Circles, a series of face-to-face videoed interviews were held with 19 First Nations residents
- Willingness and desire of community members to share stories
- Difficulty of editing content for video segments
- Consistency of experiences, recommendations, and want of outcomes
- Frustration of First Nations communities with lack of resources

# OUTCOME



- A Guide with recommendations for:
  1. Pre-event planning strategies;
  2. Processes to address the evacuation process itself;
  3. Initiatives and services to provide meaningful support to evacuating communities; and
  4. Strategies to improve relationships with host communities.

## FINDINGS – LITERATURE REVIEW

- Indigenous families and communities faced continued suffering during and post-evacuation
- Displacements resulted in social isolation; lack of access to traditional food; repeated moves; job insecurity; lack of, or inconsistent, access to education; and poor psychological health outcomes.



## FINDINGS – PRE-DISASTER PLANNING

- general lack of awareness and preparedness planning was evident at the individual and family level
- Indigenous people had very close ties to their animals and it was important for them to make plans for their care – both pets and livestock



*Lytton First Nation,  
British Columbia*

- Importance of preparing community for emergencies
- Importance of establishing trust relationships in emergency preparedness
- Role of community gatherings and cultural traditions
- Need to build inter-generational capacity within community

**JIM BROWN**



## PRE-DISASTER RECOMMENDATIONS

First Nations administrators and Band Councils:

- need to develop and maintain Emergency Plans
- Complete Hazard, Risk and Resiliency analyses
- Designate Muster Points and Family Centres





## PRE-DISASTER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need to have community residents aware of the plan
- Exercise the plan
- Promote the importance of building capacity and to complete a Skills and Knowledge Inventory
- Identify host communities for sheltering evacuees and to consider how the required transportation would be provided





## FINDINGS – EVACUATION & RELOCATION

- Family is important
- Pets are important
- Placements are usually in urban communities with few linkages to the reserve
- Lack of traditional food was an ongoing theme, across the country



*Long Plain First Nation,  
Manitoba*

- Pets and relocation of evacuees
- Role of family in disasters
- Placement away from the land
- Impact of hotel placements on past trauma

**EUNICE &  
CLEMENCE  
ASSINIBOINE**



## EVACUATION & RELOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Staying on reserve is usually the best outcome if weather permits & there is sufficient critical infrastructure
- If reconstruction is going to take awhile consider rental accommodation or accommodation with kitchens
- Community kitchens are a great option



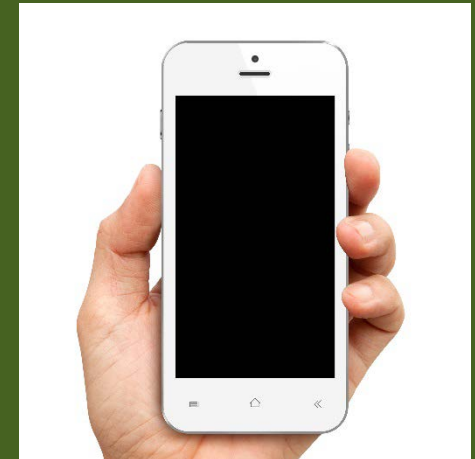
## EVACUATION & RELOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Indigenous-sensitive programs for emotional wellness was a key finding for host communities
- Engage with the Elders
- Develop strategies to use Traditional Knowledge: Healing Circles, smudging, & other healing cultural customs
- Identify whether translation services are needed



## EVACUATION & RELOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address the special needs of older persons (including the need for accessible medication); children, youth, women and girls; & men and fathers
- Loss of communication devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets) was a huge limitation, especially for youth - replacement of electronic communication devices should be considered a priority



## FINDINGS – PLANNING FOR RECOVERY

- In many cases recovery plans were non-existent prior to the event
- Strategies and priorities for rebuilding were not established
- Community engagement was not always in place
- Often communicating recovery planning efforts was difficult



*Long Plain First Nation,  
Manitoba*

- Impact of numerous moves on families
- Need for sharing circles
- Strangeness of hotel and city living
- Lack of support and resources for children and community members

**LINDA  
BUNN**



## PLANNING FOR RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Appoint a Disaster Coordinator as soon as possible
- Provide timely access to those whose homes have been affected
- Storage containers could be provided to safely store items families cannot necessarily take with them (e.g., clothing, heirlooms, pictures, and other items)
- Hold Crisis Management Briefings





## FINDINGS – HOST COMMUNITIES

- Host communities were often not well-prepared for their role
- No standards or protocols for becoming a host community
- Little local engagement with evacuated Indigenous communities prior and during their stay – often a Red Cross mandate



*Cormorant Island,  
Namgis First Nation, British Columbia*

- Be prepared for the long haul
- Role of social media in disasters
- Importance of maintaining community and cultural events
- Transitioning from an oral tradition to meeting bureaucratic expectations

**SHANNON  
ALFRED**



## TIPS FOR HOST COMMUNITIES

- Appoint a First Nations Liaison
- Link with Aboriginal Friendship Centres
- Hold a Welcoming Ceremony
- Develop a Resource Guide (e.g., location of parks, pharmacies, clinics, stores, transportation routes)
- Plan for a Walk-Around Orientation



## TIPS FOR HOST COMMUNITIES

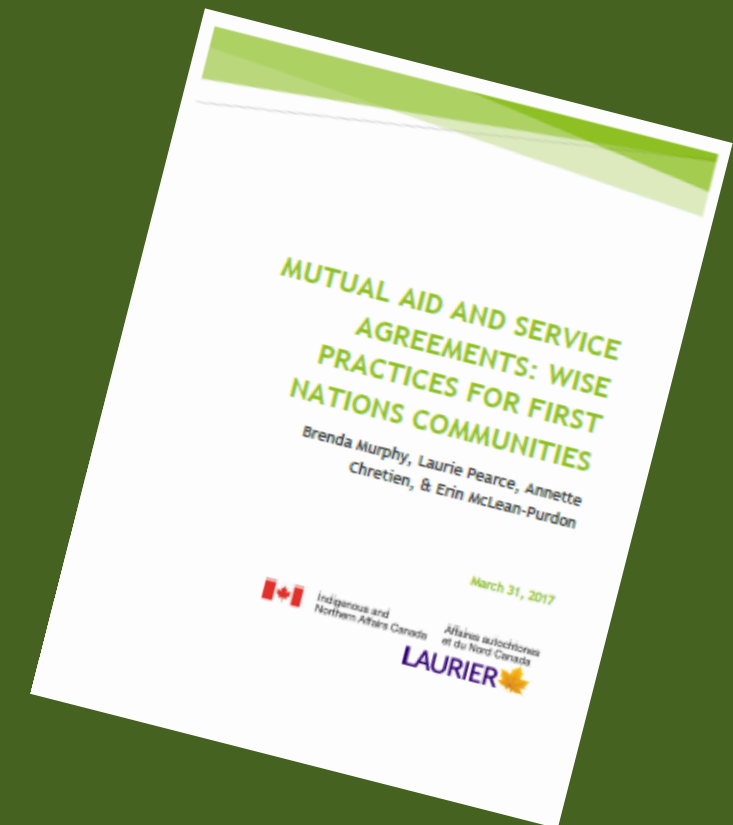
- Encourage positive relationships by reaching out to law enforcement and letting them know how best to communicate with evacuees
- Work with youth workers to put in place preventative programs to minimize the risk that youth will become involved in criminal or gang activities



# MUTUAL AID AND SERVICE AGREEMENTS (MASA): WISE PRACTICES FOR FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES

“If your community faces evacuations, consider a MASA with another First Nation or rural community. This can avoid, or reduce, the cultural and other impacts of being dislocated to a major city centre.”

“The typical documents that form the basis of agreements should be reviewed by First Nation people to ensure that cultural differences and other needs are addressed.”



*Questions?*

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# Thank you!

Videos available at:  
<http://crhnet.ca/>

Guide (EN/FR) available at:  
<http://www.resilientresearch.ca/research-publications/>

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