Neoliberalism and the Evolution of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver

by

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Abstract

This study tracks the evolution of the Government of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) from beginning to end. It identifies four stages of the UAS, determining that at each successive stage it adhered more strictly to neoliberal principles of project delivery. It explores how this intensified neoliberalization of the UAS impacted urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver by asking: How has a shift towards increasingly neoliberal government policies impacted Aboriginal organizations and their ability to deliver and sustain projects under the Urban Partnerships program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver from fiscal years 2014/2015 to 2016/2017?

This project utilizes a mixed methods approach with data collected in three stages: content analysis of UAS documents, informant interviews, and analysis of informant organizations' documents. Results show division between the federal and provincial governments over urban Aboriginal jurisdiction, while urban Aboriginal communities are expected to become responsible for their own needs.

Keywords: neoliberalism; urban Aboriginal; non-profit sector; project funding; responsible citizenship; Metro Vancouver

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List of Acronyms

BCAAFC	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
CMA	Census Metropolitan Area
GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
MVAEC	Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council
MVUAS	Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy
NAFC	National Association of Friendship Centres
OFI	Office of the Federal Interlocutor
PCO	Privy Council Office
UAS	Urban Aboriginal Strategy
UP	Urban Partnerships

Glossary

Aboriginal	The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian *Constitution* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
First Nations	A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.
Indigenous	A term that can be used interchangeably with Aboriginal; it has gained prominence as a term to describe Aboriginal peoples in an international context through the increasing visibility of international Indigenous rights movements.
Inuit	An Aboriginal people in Northern Canada, who live in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. The word means "people" in the Inuit language — Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.
Métis	People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.
Non-Status Indians	People who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but are not entitled to be registered under the Indian Act. This may be because their ancestors were never registered or because they lost their status under former provisions of the Indian Act. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.
Status Indians	People who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act. Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Chapter 1.

Introduction and Research Question

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) was a program of the federal government of Canada that operated from 1997 until March 31, 2017. The objectives of the UAS changed over time as it evolved over multiple phases of program delivery, but generally it had a stated goal of improving the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people living off-reserve in Canada's urban centres. The UAS provided project based funding to organizations, mainly non-profit agencies that were tasked with delivering programs and services to off-reserve urban Aboriginal communities. The UAS was unique in that it appeared to be the only program in Canada that was specifically designed to support urban Aboriginal people living off-reserve. There are other funding sources that can be accessed to support Aboriginal programming in urban areas, but no others that have an off-reserve, urban Aboriginal specific focus. Urban Aboriginal people represent the fastest growing segment of Canadian society (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], 2016a), but tend to be socially and economically disadvantaged compared to the general population, demonstrating a need for programming in support of this demographic.

Having a program that is widely accessible and designed to support urban Aboriginal people specifically is important because it recognizes the unique needs of urban Aboriginal communities. The majority of Aboriginal people in Canada now live in urban areas, and urban Aboriginal communities are diverse. Urban Aboriginal people are not necessarily tied to a local land base like First Nations; they could be status or non-status Indians, Métis or Inuit. Many urban Aboriginal people have migrated to urban centres from elsewhere, and while many are born in urban areas, their forebears could have migrated from other regions. There is a need to support urban Aboriginal people as they are generally underperforming on socio-economic indicators compared to the rest of Canadian society. However, because of the diversity of urban Aboriginal communities and their existence off-reserve it has not always been clear who is responsible for supporting urban Aboriginal people. Historically the federal government has acknowledged its responsibility for status Indians living on-reserve, but has maintained

that the majority of services for off-reserve Aboriginal people are the responsibility of the provinces (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996). Provinces on the other hand have been reluctant to provide directed services to urban aboriginal people as they viewed this to be the responsibility of the federal government, although urban Aboriginal people are eligible for programming that is available for all provincial residents (RCAP, 1996). Despite the historic reluctance of many actors, including the federal government, to move beyond a nation-to-nation approach that focused on status Indians on reserves, the UAS appeared to be a recognition that the Government of Canada had a role to play in supporting Canada's urban Aboriginal population.

1.1 A Brief History of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was first developed in 1997 under the then Liberal Government of Canada for the purpose of addressing the socio-economic concerns of Canada's growing Aboriginal populations living in urban centres (Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy [MVUAS], 2010a). Through the UAS, the Canadian Government sought to partner with other levels of government, Aboriginal people, and community organizations for the purpose of supporting projects which responded to local priorities for urban Aboriginal people. Initially no funding contributions were made to the UAS to support community level projects (INAC, 2010a), however UAS projects began to be delivered in 2003 during a pilot phase where $50 million was allocated to projects in 12 cities over four years (MVUAS, 2010b).

The next phase of the UAS began in 2007 with a minority Conservative government making a five year commitment to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS, 2010b). This phase was then extended for an additional two years beginning in 2012 (INAC, 2013). Including the two year extension, this combined phase ultimately lasted until March of 2014 with $58.45 million in funding being allocated to 908 projects in 15 cities over seven years for the stated purpose of supporting the participation of urban Aboriginal people in the economy (INAC, 2014a). During the second phase the private sector was added among the types of partners with which to collaborate for project delivery (MVUAS, 2010b; INAC, 2014a). Also at this time, the responsibility for the UAS was transferred from the Privy Council Office to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) where it remained until the program was concluded.

Although public documents appear to indicate that the two year extension to the second phase of the UAS was a continuation of the program, internal documents show that there was a shift in policy during this period. I have therefore identified this two year extension as a third phase of UAS program delivery. This extension period served to transition the UAS into the next phase, which had an even greater policy shift.

The fourth and final phase of project delivery under the UAS began in 2014 and lasted until March 31, 2017. At the beginning of this stage a majority Conservative government announced what it termed an “improved” Urban Aboriginal Strategy, which they indicated would achieve greater efficiency and reduced duplication by consolidating four previous programs into two new programs (Government of Canada, 2014). See Table 1 for consolidated urban Aboriginal programming. Another stated “improvement” was that the Government of Canada would now provide greater support for the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), making them responsible for the management of both UAS programs, by providing them with $43 million per year to administer funding to organizations for the purpose of delivering programs and services (Government of Canada, 2014). The NAFC in turn provided that funding to their Provincial/Territorial Association (PTA) regional affiliates to administer UAS funding to organizations within each provincial region (NAFC, n.d.).

Table 1 Consolidation of Urban Aboriginal Programming

Urban Aboriginal Programming Prior to March 31, 2014	Consolidated Urban Aboriginal Programming After March 31, 2014
1) Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Urban Youth 2) Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program 3) Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth 4) Urban Aboriginal Strategy Program	1) Urban Partnerships 2) Community Capacity Support

1.2 Purpose of the Research Project

Of the two programs that resulted from the consolidation of urban Aboriginal programming in the final stage of the UAS, this research project will focus on the Urban Partnerships (UP) program in Metro Vancouver. The UP program provided support for delivering projects, whereas the Community Capacity Support program provided operational funding to community Aboriginal organizations (INAC, 2014b), which my

research has shown had been awarded mainly to regional Friendship Centres. The UP program was therefore the portion of the UAS funding that was more comparable with previous phases of the UAS which focused on project delivery.

One of the biggest changes to project delivery under the UAS to come from the creation of the UP program was that it became a requirement that proponents have a partner to attract additional investments. Proponents were now also required to have a plan and/or partnership to sustain the momentum of a project as UP funding was not intended to provide ongoing support (INAC, 2014c). UP funding was to be awarded to projects for one fiscal year, so this implies that after one year of support from INAC, projects needed to become self-sustaining or find alternate sources of funding.

I intend to establish that as the UAS evolved to its most recent form and through different government administrations, it had increasingly taken on a more neoliberal approach to program policy. I will explore the impact that these changes in UAS policy had on proponent and potential proponent Aboriginal organizations to deliver and sustain projects under the UP program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. My research is focused on the Metro Vancouver region, which I have selected as a case study. It should be noted that funding through the UP program was not restricted to Aboriginal organizations, however I have chosen to focus on urban Aboriginal organizations because their programming is specific to the client base for which the UP program is intended. It may be that their operational structure is more dependent on Aboriginal specific funding than non-Aboriginal organizations that have other funding options. My research has been guided by the question: How has a shift towards increasingly neoliberal government policies impacted Aboriginal organizations and their ability to deliver and sustain projects under the Urban Partnerships program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver from fiscal years 2014/2015 to 2016/2017?

In the next chapter I will provide the context for my research including discussions on federal government and Aboriginal relations, urban Aboriginal people in Canada, my case study selection, and the research significance. Chapter 3, my literature review, focuses on defining neoliberalism and linking it to the non-profit sector and Aboriginal communities. Chapter 4 discusses my research methodology, while chapters 5 and 6 report on the results of my study. Chapter 7 considers my results offering future recommendations, and finally chapter 8 offers my study conclusion.

Chapter 2. Context

2.1 A Brief History of Federal Government and Aboriginal Relations in Canada

Although the intent of this research project was to critique the ways in which neoliberal approaches to project funding impacted urban Aboriginal organizations as they attempted to deliver the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, it is important to recognize that neoliberalism is a relatively new form of governance and there is a long and problematic history of government relations with Aboriginal people in Canada. The Indian Act for example, which dates back to 1876, was designed to control status Indians in Canada in invasive and paternalistic ways and had goals for forcefully assimilating Aboriginal people into mainstream Canadian society (First Nations Studies Program, 2009). This intended erasure of Indigenous identity by the Government of Canada took many forms including the establishment of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the 1969 White Paper long before neoliberalism came to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Indian Act has also enabled the federal government to define who is a status Indian based on patriarchal policies which fractured Aboriginal communities leading to a system where there are those who qualify for status and those who do not (First Nations Studies Program, 2009). Although the Indian Act represents a flawed system, it is somewhat of a double edged sword as there are certain rights and benefits that only Aboriginal people of Indian status are entitled to. Section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 has always allowed for the federal government to exercise jurisdiction over all Aboriginal people, however throughout most of Canada's history the federal government has maintained that it only has a responsibility for status Indians living on-reserve (RCAP, 1996). This has led to a dearth of programs and services for urban Aboriginal people, and although the recent Daniels decision does declare that Métis and non-Status Indians are Indians under section 91(24) of the Constitution, the ruling does not impact eligibility for programs and services targeted specifically to Status Indians (INAC, 2016b).

There has been an ongoing history of the federal government of Canada attempting to control Aboriginal people through colonial policies. Neoliberalism continues this approach, but in new ways where Aboriginal people are controlled by accountability

to government through funded programs and services that are designed to deal with the "problems" of Aboriginal communities with targeted activities that are highly specified by government. It has also been argued that neoliberalism makes these attempts to control Aboriginal people harder to detect through notions of partnerships and self-determination (Tomiak, 2011).

2.2 Urban Aboriginal People in Canada

Aboriginal people in Canada, which includes status and non-status First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, are increasingly making cities their homes. Off-reserve Aboriginal people make up the fastest growing segment of Canadian Society, and as of 2011, 56% of Aboriginal Canadians were living in urban areas, which was an increase from 49% in 2006 (INAC, 2016). This increase in urban living among Aboriginal people is likely, in part, because there are many advantages to living in cities; city living is often associated with increased levels of literacy and education, reduced poverty, better health, more access to social services, and greater cultural and political involvement (United Nations [UN], 2014). The Urban Aboriginal People's Survey confirms that urban Aboriginal people in Canada also aspire to a higher quality of life that comes with city living, citing the importance of a good job, the pursuit of higher education, the opportunity for the creative development of Aboriginal culture, and the ability to make a positive difference in their urban communities as reasons for Aboriginal people to make cities their home (Environics Institute, 2010).

Despite the opportunities that cities present, they are often places of inequality (UN, 2014). In Canada, that seems especially true for the urban Aboriginal population, which is characterized by a lack of equality, lagging behind Canada's total urban population on indicators of socio-economic development and participation. For example, information from the 2006 Canadian census shows that in urban areas with a population of 100,000 or greater, only 13% of the Aboriginal identity population aged 25-44 had a university degree compared to 33% of the non-Aboriginal population, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people was 10.6% compared to 6.1% for non-Aboriginal people, the average total income before taxes from all sources for the Aboriginal population was $27,029 compared to $37,594 for the non-Aboriginal population, 15.0% of Aboriginal people received government transfer payments compared to 9.6% of non-Aboriginal people, and 44.8% of Aboriginal children under age 15 were in low income families

compared to 20.5% of non-Aboriginal children (INAC, 2010b). These indicators demonstrate clearly that urban Aboriginal people are at a socio-economic disadvantage compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts in urban areas. However, there is room for optimism if programs like the UAS are able to make a positive and impactful difference in urban Aboriginal Canadians' lives.

2.3 Case Study Selection

For the purpose of my research I have focused specifically on the case of Metro Vancouver, also known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District, which has the same boundaries as the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area as defined by Statistics Canada (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). I have generally used the term Metro Vancouver, but all three names could be used interchangeably. Although the UAS is a national program, and urban Aboriginal inequality is a national issue, I have decided to focus on the delivery of the UAS UP program in a single region due to the scope of this thesis project. I had considered conducting a national survey of Aboriginal organizations in the nine Canadian metropolitan areas with the largest Aboriginal populations, which in descending order include Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal, Saskatoon, and Regina (INAC, 2016). However, a case study has proven to be a more realistic and achievable goal. A case study design of a single region has allowed me to gather rich and detailed data, and conduct a more intensive investigation (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2014) into the ways that the funding model for the UP program has impacted urban Aboriginal organizations.

I chose Metro Vancouver for my case study, in part, because it has a large urban Aboriginal population (the third largest in Canada), and a correspondingly large group of urban Aboriginal organizations who provide services to the community. The majority of urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver belong to a coalition called the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC), of which there are 24 member organizations. The membership list of MVAEC has been essential for me to be able to construct a workable sampling frame for my research. Metro Vancouver however could otherwise be considered to be fairly typical among the nine Canadian metropolitan areas with the largest urban Aboriginal identity populations that I was considering for a national survey. Urban Aboriginal people in Metro Vancouver are underperforming on indicators of socio-economic development and participation just as they are in other large urban

areas in Canada, and so urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver would be faced with similar issues as urban Aboriginal organizations delivering services in other metropolitan regions. For example, 25.2% of Aboriginal adults in Metro Vancouver have less than high school completion compared to 14.6% of Metro Vancouver's total population, the Aboriginal unemployment rate in Metro Vancouver is 12.6% compared to 7.1 % for the total population of Metro Vancouver, 40.4% of the Aboriginal population in Metro Vancouver is spending 30% or more of household total income on shelter costs compared to 33.5% of the region's total population, and the median before-tax income for individuals aged 15 and over is $22,326 for Aboriginal people in Metro Vancouver compared to $28,726 for Metro Vancouver's total population (Statistics Canada, 2013a; Statistics Canada, 2013b). While my goal was not statistical representativeness, when a case study is typical of a set of cases it enhances its ability to generate explanatory insights (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2014). I believe Metro Vancouver's urban Aboriginal community to be similar to other large Canadian metropolitan areas.

Another reason for selecting Metro Vancouver as my case study is its ease of access for me as a student researcher. I am based out of Metro Vancouver, which has allowed for me to spend time meeting with urban Aboriginal organizations in person. I also have a large number of networking connections among urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver, which contributed to a willingness for organizations to meet with me, and enhanced my chances for success in conducting this Master of Urban Studies research project. I do want to acknowledge that I am myself Aboriginal, and that I worked in the urban Aboriginal community of Metro Vancouver for almost 14 years with an organization which has received UAS Urban Partnerships funding in the past. I was not however directly involved in the management or delivery of UP projects, and I believe that my experience as an Aboriginal person working in this community has given me valuable insight into this research topic, the importance of which should outweigh any concerns over potential biases that I may have.

Bias has been described as previous knowledge and experience that results from one's own position and helps give understanding to a situation (Stewart, 2009a). I acknowledge that I have bias; however I believe that it is not possible, nor is it necessary to completely eliminate bias in research, and bias can be used as a tool to inform one's studies. According to Stewart (2009a), "No researcher can avoid bias through selection of method; all people interact with some level of bias as a matter of natural human

thinking and behavior" (p. 59), and bias is valuable to research processes as well as data analysis. I also believe that it is important for Aboriginal people to conduct research on Aboriginal issues, a notion which is supported by Stewart whose research suggests that there is a "need for community based and Indigenous research to be the norm in Native communities" (Directions for Future Research and Policy, 2009b).

2.4 Significance of Research

Because of the increasing number of Aboriginal people living in cities, with over half of all Aboriginal people in Canada now making urban areas their home, I believe it is important to study the experiences and conditions of Aboriginal people living in Canada's urban centres. Cities may represent places of opportunity for Aboriginal Canadians, but Aboriginal people in urban areas often face disproportionate levels of inequality and marginalization, which results in high rates of homelessness, poor health and high levels of addictions, as well as leading to underperformance on indicators of socio-economic participation as was demonstrated previously in this chapter. In order to improve urban Aboriginal peoples' quality of life and attain parity with non-Aboriginal Canadians it is therefore necessary for governments and community organizations to deliver social programs that support urban Aboriginal people. It is also necessary however to critically examine those programs, such as the UAS, to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the urban Aboriginal community, and will continue to meet urban Aboriginal community needs.

Applicants for UP projects of the UAS were required to demonstrate that they had the commitment of a partner in order to be eligible for funding, and a plan or partner to sustain the ongoing momentum generated by the government investment as the UP program was not intended to provide ongoing support to organizations beyond one fiscal year. This has reduced the responsibility of the federal government in delivering Aboriginal economic development programming, and placed additional responsibility on organizations to find partners who in turn would also become responsible for Aboriginal economic development in Canada. This approach is consistent with neoliberal strategies for governance and social program delivery. Although I was able to locate a number of studies that linked neoliberalism with social program delivery in general (Brodie, 2007; Guenther, 2011; Hall & Reed, 1998; Ilcan, 2009; Peck, 2001; Phillips & Ilcan, 2004; Ready, 2012; Stern & Hall, 2015) as well as some that linked neoliberalism with on-

reserve First Nations economic development (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004; MacDonald, 2011; Scott, 2006; Slowey, 2008), there are few sources that link neoliberalism with urban Aboriginal communities (Tomiak, 2011). Tomiak (2011) does connect neoliberal governance with urban Aboriginal communities in Canada, although much of her study focuses on how neoliberalism and programs like the UAS contribute to the ongoing colonialism of urban Aboriginal communities and Indigenous erasure through the elimination of Aboriginal rights and self-determination. There are places where Tomiak (2011) and my study converge, but my research is more focused on how neoliberal policies impact urban Aboriginal organizations delivering services, and so my study addresses a critical gap in the literature by directly connecting neoliberalism with urban Aboriginal program delivery.

Neoliberal approaches to Aboriginal economic development and partnership building usually encourage the commodification of land and natural resources contained within First Nations reserves, and often tout examples of success such as the Osoyoos Indian Band, which claims to have almost no unemployment (MacDonald, 2014). Urban Aboriginal organizations however typically have no land base or natural resources from which to leverage opportunities and so neoliberal approaches to Aboriginal economic development should not be expected to benefit off-reserve urban Aboriginal communities in the same way they can for some First Nations communities. Further complicating this matter for urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver is the fact that the Vancouver region is located on traditional, unceded Coast Salish territory, and there are urban reserves such as the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsawwassen and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver may therefore find themselves in competition with local First Nations for partnerships and project development. Although the UP program is not intended to support on-reserve activities, partnership and development opportunities are limited in the region and so it is important to consider how this affects urban Aboriginal organizations vying for UP projects.

I am particularly interested in the extent to which off-reserve urban Aboriginal organizations are able to build meaningful partnerships, the willingness of partners to make financial contributions to projects and what the nature of those contributions are, and how successful urban Aboriginal organizations have been at maintaining a project's momentum once their term-limited UAS funding has ended. As the UAS ended on March 31, 2017, the timeframe of my study did not allow me to determine whether Aboriginal

organizations funded for the 2016/2017 fiscal year were able to sustain their projects once their UP program funding ended. I was however able to determine if and how Aboriginal organizations who received funding in fiscal years 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 were able to sustain their projects, as well as how organizations funded in fiscal year 2016/2017 planned to sustain their projects. I have attempted to determine if it is realistic to place long-term financial responsibility on non-profit Aboriginal community organizations and their partners for the economic development of urban Aboriginal Canadians. I believe that there are benefits to partnership based programming, such as having an employer partner who is willing to hire program participants, but the benefits of partnerships are limited and there are negative consequences to placing such high expectations on the building of partnerships to sustain programs.

By examining the UP program of the UAS and neoliberal approaches to urban Aboriginal programming, I hope that my research can play a role in informing policy makers on the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach moving forward. It may be that the mandated inclusion of partners in the UP program has had a positive impact on the success of the UAS. However, there is a considerable amount of time, effort, and financial investment for Aboriginal organizations and their partners that has been put into developing projects for the UP program. It would be counterproductive for these projects to cease due to a lack of continued funding from the federal government, especially in cases when UP projects have proven successful at increasing urban Aboriginal people's participation in the economy. If UP projects that have demonstrated success at increasing urban Aboriginal economic participation are forced to shut down because Aboriginal organizations and their partners are not able to sustain a program's momentum without continued government funding, it may have a negative impact on the UAS' stated goals and objectives. It is important for all of Canadian society that urban Aboriginal people be provided with opportunities to participate in the economy as their economic participation should lead to self-sufficiency resulting in social return on investment such as savings to Income Assistance and Employment Insurance programs, while also allowing for urban Aboriginal people to be active contributors to the Canadian economy. The greatest impact could be felt by members of urban Aboriginal communities themselves as increased urban Aboriginal economic participation could lead to continued improvements in standard of living and quality of life for urban Aboriginal people in Canada. The next chapter will go into more detail in describing

neoliberalism and how it has been shown to impact project delivery in general, while also exploring the literature that links neoliberalism specifically with Aboriginal communities.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

As my research question implies that there has been a shift towards increasingly neoliberal government policies over time in the context of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, I sought evidence to confirm or deny this evolution of neoliberalism in my research. In order to do that however, it was first necessary for me to define what neoliberalism is. The focus of this chapter will be on defining neoliberalism and placing it in the context of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy through a review of relevant literature.

Neoliberalism can be difficult to define and many scholars have noted that there is no single neoliberalism (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Stern & Hall, 2015). It has been referred to as “a complex project” (Ready, 2012, p. 28), a process of multiple and often contradictory effects and practices (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013), and as “not always straightforward in terms of the kinds of relationships it fosters and shapes” (Phillips & Ilcan, 2004, p 405). There are however a number of important commonalities and patterns that distinguish neoliberalism from other forms of governance and economic paradigms (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Neoliberalism is inherently capitalist in that it is steeped in market logic; it is commonly described using terms and phrases such as privatization, market driven, entrepreneurial, and as being characterized by reduced social spending from governments (Atleo, 2008; Caplan & Ricciardelli, 2016; MacDonald, 2011; Ready, 2012). It is often associated with the Reagan and Thatcher governments in the United States and Britain respectively, and has since become the dominant form of governance in the western world (Stern & Hall, 2015). Neoliberalism has been described as the new normal (Keil, 2009), and in the urban context as being everywhere, “seeping into every pore of urban political life” (Theodore & Peck, 2012, p. 20). There are both positive impacts and negative consequences that result from the hegemonic presence of neoliberalism in the contemporary western world. Its proliferation throughout western governance makes it important to understand neoliberalism in the context of government funded programming.

3.2 The Origins of Neoliberalism in Canada

Prior to neoliberalism, the dominant form of governance in Canada as well as other western democracies was Keynesianism (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993; Ready, 2012; Stern & Hall, 2015). Keynesianism came to prominence after the Second World War with goals of stable incomes and full employment (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993) while also aiming to ensure high levels of social security, health, and housing (Ilcan, 2009). It adhered to the principles that both state and market based institutions were important for a healthy and functioning economy (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993). In Canada, Keynesians saw markets as the primary means for distribution of resources to society, but acknowledged that markets fail and the state could play a role in correcting those failures (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993; Ready, 2012). In this way, Keynesianism could be seen to represent a reconciliation between state and market forces.

Keynesianism, nonetheless, is strongly associated with the proliferation of policies and programs that supported social welfare (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993). The Keynesian welfare state saw growth in areas such as health, employment and economic development, education, social security and housing (Ilcan, 2009; Ready, 2012). It relied on taxation, state planning and economic interventions, as well as a large bureaucracy within government to foster this growth (Ilcan, 2009). The Keynesian approach to social welfare shifted responsibility for alleviating harm and risk away from individual citizens, instead placing these responsibilities on society at large. In Canada spending on social programs rose in the 1960s and 1970s, especially as a result of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), legislation that extended welfare entitlement equally to those in need while expanding government support for the non-profit sector (Peck, 2001; Scott 2003). Canada's system of welfare entitlement programs was considered to be more generous than that of its American counterparts (Peck, 2001) which according to Brodie (2007) contributed to a sense of pan-Canadian nationalism distinguishing Canadians "at least according to the nationalist myth, from their less caring and less sharing American neighbours" (p. 98).

By the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s, neoliberalism began to replace Keynesianism as the dominant form of economic regulation and governance in Western democracies (Stern & Hall, 2015). As a result of the economic crisis that began in the 1970s and the perceived role that an expanded public sector played in the slumping

economy, Canadian governments began implementing many neoliberal ideas in the 1980 and 1990s (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993). Whereas Keynesianism held the position that government had a role to play in ensuring the well-being of its citizens, neoliberalism was more concerned with lowering taxes and reducing regulations to attract global capital in order to stimulate the economy, while eliminating or rolling back social programs (Stern & Hall, 2015). As a result, there were many cuts to government programs, industries such as communications and transportation were deregulated, and there was a privatization of many government corporations and services (Howlett & Ramesh, 1993). The Mulroney government began the process of dismantling the Keynesian social welfare state in Canada in the 1980s including selling state assets and making funding cuts to social programs (Ready, 2012). The formal adoption of neoliberalism in Canada can be dated to the 1994 federal budget of the Chrétien government (Stern & Hall, 2015); with further cuts being made in 1996 as that same government abolished the Canada Assistance Plan, bringing an end to the principle of needs based welfare in Canada (Peck, 2001).

Since that time neoliberalism has become the dominant mode of governance regardless of which political party is in power (Stern & Hall, 2015). It is also important to acknowledge that although my research is intended to provide a critique of neoliberal approaches to urban Aboriginal program funding, there are benefits to this model, and Keynesianism was itself a flawed system. For example, there are those who argue that the scaling back of government that is characteristic of neoliberalism has provided new opportunities for Aboriginal autonomy and self-governance (MacDonald, 2011). On the other hand, in critiquing Keynesianism, Stern & Hall (2015) indicate that it was patriarchal, relegated women to the domestic sphere, and by reinforcing a common purpose among citizens could suppress differences. Brodie (2007) further notes that under the Keynesian welfare state universal entitlements to social citizenship were almost exclusively provided to “the white male breadwinner” (p. 98) and systemic barriers to equality such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and discrimination towards persons with disabilities was common. In the Aboriginal context, critics of the welfare state argue that its paternal nature was problematic for Indigenous people as the Government of Canada exercised control over Aboriginal persons through the welfare regime (MacDonald, 2011). This study is not intended to suggest a return to a Keynesian welfare state, rather it is meant to explore the negative impacts of government funding

cuts and a movement away from a social welfare-based to a partnership-based rationale, while also considering ways in which neoliberalism has effected positive outcomes on urban Aboriginal programming.

3.3 Government Downsizing and Privatization

According to MacDonald (2011), privatization is the main identifier of the politics of neoliberalism, meaning that governments take on less responsibility as they are downsized. This retraction of government is based on the premise that without interference from the state, markets run more fairly and more efficiently (Phillips & Ilcan, 2004). The heightened emphasis on the market however, devalues the need for social programs. Under a neoliberal governance model, the state values the market above all else and thus utilizes market logic in its own affairs (Brodie, 2007). As a result, many services that were previously delivered by the public sector are contracted out which serves to reduce the size of the state while introducing market principles into the delivery of these services (Scott, 2003). Social programs, for example, are often contracted out to non-profit agencies that are expected to compete for projects and deliver services in the most “cost effective” way possible, which often times means that they are underfunded.

Another key component of neoliberalism is that it involves lowering taxes, resulting in government that is less involved in the delivery of social programs (Stern & Hall, 2015), and limitations to the funding that is available for the organizations that do provide services. The neoliberal rationale behind this offloading of services is that it is purported to reduce social program costs while maintaining essential program features (Hall & Reed, 1998). Governments benefit from cost savings as responsibility for citizen well-being shifts from the state to the individual and community level (Stern & Hall, 2015). There are advantages to this approach as many local organizations do excellent work, and it can be argued that reduced state involvement allows for more program design at the community level. However, this added responsibility at the community level includes absorbing some of the social program delivery costs as community organizations are often required to use their own funds to match or leverage funding as part of their contract (Stern & Hall, 2015). As these community organizations are usually non-profits, the constant need to contribute funds for projects from an already limited budget and leverage additional funding can put a strain on organizations.

3.4 Individualization and Responsible Citizenship

As there is a move towards smaller government and privatization under neoliberalism, responsibility for what would otherwise be considered problems of a collective social nature is shifted from the level of the state to that of the individual (Brodie, 2007). This process is referred to as individualization (Phillips & Ilcan, 2004) or alternately as responsible citizenship (Ilcan, 2009). Targeted approaches towards individualization are increasingly embedded into social policy which expects that citizens become self-sufficient market based actors who are responsible for their own as well as their family's needs (Brodie, 2007). Thus social programs that do remain under neoliberalism expect that services result in participants being able to care for themselves without further government support. This responsibility of citizenship also extends from individuals to communities along with other entities such as non-profit organizations and the private sector who become responsible for securing the economic and social rights of citizens (Ilcan, 2009; Stern & Hall, 2015).

This approach assumes that all people are the same and that barriers such as racism and discrimination no longer exist (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). There is an expectation that all individuals, regardless of how unfair or unjust their life circumstances may be, are responsible for their own social and economic advancement (Ilcan, 2009). This emphasis on individual responsibility can foster "blame-the-victim thinking" for individuals and communities that are experiencing inequality (Ready, 2012, p. 28) and with regard to the Aboriginal community specifically there has been a tendency to view Indigenous peoples as being responsible for their own misfortune (Walker, 2005). In actuality however, responsibility for one's own life is often not a matter of choice; Brodie (2004), for example, argues that choice as described in the process of individualization is illusory and "exceeds the grasp of the possible for most of us" (p. 104). In other words, the idea that people have the ability to simply choose to better their own lives is not the reality for many people. With regards to urban Aboriginal people, this approach fails to recognize the oppressive nature of colonial policies and how that has created disadvantages for Aboriginal communities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015), which calls into question the effectiveness of individualization as an approach to urban Aboriginal social development.

3.5 The Role of Partnerships and Leveraged Funds

Under a neoliberal governance model responsibility for citizen well-being has shifted from society to communities and individuals themselves (Stern & Hall, 2015), and partnerships are touted as another way for both individuals and communities to demonstrate responsible citizenship as it is argued that they are cost effective agents of change that build capacity through shared knowledge (Phillips & Ilcan, 2004). There is also an assumption that private industry will come to the table as partners and take on responsibility for the social and economic development of citizens as businesses are viewed as desiring healthy communities that will support and contribute to the long-term sustainability of their enterprise (Ilcan, 2009).

In the context of delivering social programs, neoliberal government policies often involve community organizations developing partnerships in order to leverage funding in addition to contributions from the primary funder. Increasingly, these partnership arrangements are becoming a requirement as proponents are expected to demonstrate that they have secured financial or in-kind contributions from other sources before funders will extend their support (Scott, 2003). These leveraged contributions can play an important role in community organizations being able to deliver projects and pursue their mission, but leveraged funding should not be expected to take the place of secure contract funding, and these contributions can be unstable depending on market conditions. As well, the pursuit of partnerships and leveraged funding can be quite burdensome for non-profit community organizations which must pursue these relationships on their own time and at their own expense (Scott, 2003). Negotiating these relationships can be a complex process as partners may be hesitant to commit to a project without a primary funder, and if there are time delays, as is often the case with project funding, partners may be forced to withdraw from the project. Additionally, under a neoliberal regime, funders encourage partnerships because they believe there is potential to completely offload responsibility for services to those partners (Gibson, O'Donnell, & Rideout, 2007). However, partners are not likely to take on the primary responsibility for long-term funding of social programs.

3.6 The Non-Profit Sector and Competitive Grant Funding

In her seminal report on the state of the non-profit sector in Canada, Scott (2003) describes a funding regime that has emerged which “threatens the financial capacity and security of the non-profit and voluntary sector” (p. 35). One of the key concerns that is highlighted in her report is that there has been a shift away from a core funding model to one that is project based. Core funding is more advantageous to non-profit organizations as it is more predictable and provides longer term funding, whereas project funding is short term, unpredictable and insecure, and generally there is no guarantee of renewal. Core funding is also better suited to non-profit organizations in achieving their mission as they “retain a significant degree of independence in selecting and implementing program and organizational objectives” (Scott, 2003, p. 39). With project based funding, however, the control of program content tends to be highly specified by the funder. Another limitation of project based funding is that project budgets are narrowly prescribed, normally excluding organizational costs that cannot be tied directly to the program with limited fees for administration and costs that are necessary for organizational sustainability (Scott, 2003). In her report, Scott was speaking of the non-profit sector in general as opposed to Aboriginal community organizations specifically, but all of the urban Aboriginal agencies in my study were not-for-profit and the UP program was a project based source of funding so it is reasonable to conclude that her findings would also be applicable to urban Aboriginal non-profit organizations.

According to Stern & Hall (2015), proposal writing, the means by which project funding is generally secured, is itself a technology of neoliberal governance where organizations (including municipal governments) are funded at basic levels and then expected to compete for additional short-term project dollars. This competitive process is tied to neoliberal ideals which prescribe that organizations must prove their efficiency and accountability in order to secure or “win” project dollars (Scott, 2003). This mentality is linked to responsible citizenship as organizations that win competitive grants “are told that they are better, more innovative, and more responsible than those who lose” (Stern & Hall, 2015, p. 191). The granting process is intended to be competitive as government funding under neoliberalism is not guaranteed as an entitlement (Stern & Hall, 2015).

Under a neoliberal approach to project funding, once a contract is secured there are heightened expectations of outcomes and results accountability (Ilcan, 2009; Ready,

2012; Scott, 2003). According to Scott (2003) this focus on outcomes is intended to show a causal relationship between project activities and resulting changes over time. By making financial supports conditional on outcome delivery, funders are able to exert greater control over contracted organizations with increased expectations of accountability. This approach is tied to corporate logic that is favored by neoliberalism, but it is considered by some to be a poor fit for the work of community organizations (Ready, 2012). The programming of non-profits can be negatively impacted through increased accountability to government as accountability to their community becomes secondary to their need to report to funders (Scott, 2003). Nonetheless, this shift to outcomes thinking in project funding has generally been welcomed by the non-profit sector, yet misconceptions that non-profits are unaccountable persists (Scott, 2003).

One important consideration for the competitive granting process that I would like to highlight as having negative consequences on some non-profit organizations is that with increasingly targeted funding, there is a bias in favour of organizations that are more well established and that have the capacity and infrastructure to compete for project dollars and pursue constantly changing funding priorities (Scott, 2003). Within the non-profit sector there are organizations that range from small and community based groups to large umbrella organizations on a national and even international scale. Larger organizations tend to have larger budgets and according to Scott (2003) studies have shown that the size of an organization's annual operating budget is an indicator of their capacity to adapt to changing environments. Within the urban Aboriginal community, many organizations are under-funded and under-staffed so there is a danger that non-aboriginal organizations that have greater capacity will be awarded contracts for Aboriginal specific program delivery (Walker, 2005).

A final point that I would like to make about competitive grants and the non-profit sector is that funding through this competitive granting model is often administered by a quasi-independent agency and not through a government ministry, further distancing the state from social program delivery (Stern & Hall, 2015). This is important to recognize when considering the UP program because INAC transferred the majority of responsibility for administering project dollars to the NAFC rather than administering it themselves. By distancing themselves from program delivery, it absolves the government of responsibility for failures when projects do not succeed as expected, placing the blame on the contracted organization. When projects do not achieve desired

results, inadequacies of funded organizations as well as local barriers to development are blamed as opposed to external conditions (Stern & Hall, 2015). There is no consideration given to the possibility that it may be the funding model that is flawed.

3.7 Neoliberalism and Aboriginal Peoples

Neoliberalism and its relation to Aboriginal people is an understudied topic as there are relatively few studies that link neoliberalism with Indigenous peoples in Canada (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Much of the limited literature that does exist seems to suggest that neoliberalism has provided progressive opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians, but most studies are focused on on-reserve First Nations as opposed to off-reserve urban Aboriginal communities.

Concepts of neoliberalism do appear to be somewhat compatible with Aboriginal notions of autonomy and self-governance as neoliberal ideology is characterized by a reduced role for the state (MacDonald, 2011), and this retraction of the state can be seen to open up space for discourses around Aboriginal self-determination (Tomiak, 2011). Many Aboriginal scholars and activists have called for a rejection of the state, instead focussing on a need to assert their own jurisdiction over Aboriginal issues and rights (MacDonald, 2011). This can be understood through an historical analysis of the welfare state which is associated with Keynesianism and is often viewed critically by Aboriginal people as being paternal and problematic in nature (MacDonald, 2011). In Canada, the welfare regime for Aboriginal people has a history of intense and unwanted intervention, forced assimilation, and community fragmentation. Status Indians were not even considered persons under federal law until 1951, and held no political rights until 1960 (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004). These factors have led to mistrust and resentment towards government, motivating calls for a rejection of the state.

However, MacDonald (2011) cautions that those that are seeking meaningful self-determination for Aboriginal people should be wary of embracing neoliberalism as it presents a danger that governments could co-opt Aboriginal arguments for autonomy and self-governance to meet state objectives. Governments that are seeking to minimize their responsibility for Aboriginal social programming could claim that it is the will of the Aboriginal community that they manage their own affairs. As well, concepts such as Indigenous development, empowerment, and participation that were used in the past as

part of social movements are now part of the common language that governments use to promote neoliberalism (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004). Even more insidious, it has been argued that an imperialist agenda is actually intensifying under neoliberalism, eliminating Indigenous rights while making this process of rights elimination harder to detect through notions of self-government and partnerships (Tomiak, 2011).

MacDonald (2011) does acknowledge that there are instances of opportunity and success when employing a neoliberal approach towards Aboriginal programming. She cites the work of Scott (2006) and Slowey (2008) for examples of neoliberal successes with Membertou Inc., and the Mikisew Cree First Nation respectively. In the case of Membertou they have created a number of new enterprises and partnerships that are yielding success in the form of financial returns, and for the Mikisew Cree they now have a net worth of over $35 million that is expanding, on average, at a rate of 7% annually. Although there are examples of success, MacDonald (2011) indicates that oftentimes when large areas of responsibility are handed off to Aboriginal peoples, it is done so without passing on the decision-making power required for true transformative change. There is also a lack of financial resources provided to Aboriginal groups to accompany this increased responsibility (Tomiak, 2011). As a result, social policy is shifted away from holistic, transformative, and capacity-building approaches (MacDonald, 2011).

One of the main approaches to Aboriginal economic development under neoliberalism is through the commodification of land and land-based resources (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004). Indigenous communities are encouraged to use land as collateral for participation in the market economy (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Lands are valued for primary resources such as oil, gas and minerals, as well as for services contained within them such as protective environmental and ecosystem services. Although not always consistent with Aboriginal values and understandings of nature, commodification of lands does provide economic opportunity for land-based First Nations (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). This is consistent with recommendations for Aboriginal economic development that emanate from policy documents such as the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP, 1996) and the 2007 report from the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples titled *Sharing Canada's Prosperity – A Hand up, Not a Hand Out* (St. Germain & Sibbeston, 2007). Such an approach however favors First Nations who have a land base, and provides little opportunity for off-reserve urban Aboriginal people in Canada.

Aboriginal people living off-reserve in urban areas get left behind and are effectively marginalized as this model for economic development is exclusionary to their circumstances and needs (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004; Walker, 2005).

3.8 Defining Neoliberalism in the Context of the UAS

For the purpose of this research project it has been my intent to define neoliberal government policies of the UAS, as referred to in my research question, as being characterized by reduced responsibility and funding by government, while encouraging and/or requiring partnerships with the public and private sector in order to leverage funding for program delivery and sustainability. This definition has been supported by my literature review, and to that I would add that policies of the UAS have placed an enhanced responsibility on the urban Aboriginal community for their own betterment in spite of limited financial support from the federal government. My literature review has also helped me come to understand that competitive grant funding, as is seen with the UAS call for proposal process, is itself a tool of neoliberalism that holds potential proponent organizations to a high level of accountability while further distancing governments from program delivery. I have also learned that among Aboriginal organizations, who often express goals for autonomy and self-determination, there is a danger of governments co-opting this terminology in self-serving ways in pursuit of their own neoliberal agenda. Additionally, I have learned that much of the broader economic policy for Aboriginal people in Canada is focused on the commodification of land and land-based resources, which are not a resource that is available for off-reserve urban Aboriginal communities to capitalize on. I have considered all of these aspects of neoliberalism in the data collection stage of my study.

Because my research question mentions an increasing shift towards neoliberalism, I do feel it is important to acknowledge at this point that since its inception in 1997, the UAS has always been a product of a neoliberal approach to governance, as findings from my literature review demonstrate that neoliberalism was formally adopted into Canadian policy in 1994 and has been the model for governance by every political party that has come to power since. Neoliberalism in Canada therefore pre-dates the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. However I will argue in subsequent chapters that as the UAS has evolved to its most recent incarnation, it has taken on a stricter adherence to neoliberal principles.

Chapter 4. Methodology and Data Collection

This thesis project employed a mixed methods approach to research in evaluating the impacts that increasingly neoliberal government policies have had on Aboriginal organizations' ability to deliver and sustain Urban Partnerships projects of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. I have collected and analyzed data in three ways, namely 1) a content analysis of historical UAS documents, 2) semi-structured qualitative interviews of both urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal non-profit organizations in Metro Vancouver, as well as federal government employees with knowledge of the UP program and 3) content analysis of Metro Vancouver urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal non-profit organizations' documents to generate quantitative data such as the amount of funding contributed by organizations' various partners. These three approaches to research combined have provided me with the data used to demonstrate that there has been an intensification of neoliberal policy in the UAS over time, and evaluate how this has affected urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver, while also providing some insights into the effectiveness of this funding model in achieving stated Urban Partnerships program goals.

4.1 Content Analysis of UAS Documents

I intended to begin the data collection phase of my thesis project by gathering and analyzing federal government documents related to the UAS such as funding policies, backgrounders, news releases, fact sheets, and requests for proposal to establish that, over time, the UAS had taken on a stricter adherence to neoliberal principles. Performing a historical analysis of the content of these documents to show changes in UAS policy and its stricter adherence to neoliberalism is compatible with Babbie & Benaquisto (2014) who indicate that theoretical paradigms (such as neoliberalism) often inform historical and comparative research. Because organizations such as governments tend to document themselves, you can examine official organization documents to study their development as part of historical research (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2014). In my study, I have used content analysis to chart the evolution of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

Some of the most current information was available online and some past content was archived on the web, but I also had to make a request to the Government of Canada through the Access to Information Act to acquire much of this data. Requests were made to both INAC and the Canadian Privy Council Office (PCO) for this information. As well, because the most recent cycle of the UAS involved INAC providing funding to the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), who in turn funded provincial or territorial Friendship Centre associations to administer project dollars to service providers in each region, I also gathered and analyzed data from documents related to the Urban Partnerships program of the UAS from the NAFC's and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centre's (BCAAFC) web sites. At the onset of my research, I had identified three phases of the UAS, and so I sought to gather all of the documents available to me from each phase to build an argument for this progression towards a stricter adherence to neoliberalism.

I had initially intended to do a complete content analysis of UAS Urban Partnerships documents to begin my data collection and analysis. I felt that this would give me a greater understanding of the UP program, providing me a knowledge base which would inform me as I designed my interview questions and proceeded with conducting informant interviews. However, I was prevented from gathering my data in such a linear fashion due to a delay in receiving the documents from my Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) requests. Although I received an acknowledgement in response to both of my requests in a timely manner indicating that my requests would be processed within 30 calendar days, near the end of each 30 day period I received further correspondence indicating that extensions to my requests were required. The PCO stated that they required an extension of up to 90 days, and in the case of INAC they indicated that they required an extension of 210 days beyond the statutory deadline. I was able to modify both of my requests to limit their scope as I was informed that fewer documents for their teams to review would probably speed up the process, however they could not guarantee that my requests would be completed any faster. As a result, and in order to stay on track with my work plan for completing this thesis project, I made the decision to proceed with my informant interviews after a preliminary review of UAS documents that I was able to gather online.

Although later than expected, both of my ATIP requests were eventually completed within three months. I then began a process of reviewing these documents to

determine which ones were relevant and useful for my study. Once I selected the documents for analysis, I combed through them looking for identifiers of neoliberalism. In my literature review I identified common themes related to neoliberalism, such as government downsizing, responsible citizenship, privatization, and the role of private industry and partnerships. These common themes formed the conceptual framework for coding these government and policy documents that I would use to show that over time more concepts related to neoliberalism began to emerge and at a greater intensity.

Each of my ATIP requests was provided to me as a single document, which appeared to be scanned as an image rather than text. In the case of the INAC request, the document was over 1,200 pages. This presented some challenges for me in using computerized qualitative analysis software such as NVivo because in this form NVivo could not recognize the text, and the size of the document made it difficult to scroll through. Instead of relying on NVivo, for this portion of my data analysis I chose to print out the relevant sections of each ATIP document, and combining them with the other documents that I printed from the internet, I coded them manually, the old fashioned way with pen to paper. I then constructed a table using Microsoft Excel to compare different phases of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in areas such as the program objective, the role of partnerships, the role of the federal government, and sustainability goals before writing up my results.

4.2 Participant Interviews

I also engaged in in-depth interviews with key informants in order to collect data as part of my primary research. My main strategy was to interview informants who hold upper level management positions, such as Executive Directors, with urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver. I began to identify these informants through the membership list of the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC), an umbrella organization and coalition of urban Aboriginal groups, which includes the vast majority of urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver, although with some notable exceptions such as the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia, Aboriginal Tourism BC, and Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation. I then cross-checked the MVAEC list against the publicly available list of organizations that have been funded for UP projects in the most recent phase of the UAS in order to determine if there were any other urban Aboriginal groups outside of the MVAEC's

membership who received UP funding. See Appendix A for my initial detailed sampling frame.

The first 25 organizations in the sampling frame are members of MVAEC, and only the last one is not. However, the Urban Spirit Foundation is actually the charitable arm of Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (an MVAEC member), and so I combined these two organizations together and counted them as one organization. As my research progressed I determined that two of the MVAEC member agencies, Healing our Spirit Society and Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, were no longer active so I excluded them from my list. That left me with 23 urban Aboriginal organizations in my sampling frame.

I used purposive, non-random sampling to select my interview participants from this list. I identified four potential categories of informants in this sampling frame: 1) organizations who have considered, but never applied for UP program funding 2) organizations who have applied for, but never received UP program funding 3) organizations who have received UP program funding, but only in one or two years of this phase of the UAS, and finally 4) organizations who have received UP funding in all three years of this phase of the UAS. My initial plan was to interview at least three organizations in each of the above four categories for a total of 12 interviews. However, I was open to the possibility of interviewing all 23 participants in the sampling frame if I felt that I had not yet reached saturation and was continuing to learn new information after my first round of interviews. I had felt that there could be a valuable level of understanding gained from looking at the entire population of urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver.

One limitation of my sampling frame was that I could only determine whether or not an organization had been funded and in which years. I was not able to determine whether the organizations that had not been funded had applied for UP funding or not, making it impossible to specifically identify category 1 and 2 informants prior to making contact. I did my best to try and ensure representation from all four categories of informants, however I was not able to identify any category 2 informants: those who had applied for, but never received UP funding. As well, one organization that agreed to be interviewed was not listed as having ever received UP funding and so I assumed that they would be a potential category 1 or 2 informant. However, when I met with them they

informed me that they had in fact received UP funding in fiscal year 2014/2105, making them a category 3 informant.

I eventually made at least one attempt to contact each organization in my sampling frame. One organization declined to be interviewed because their Executive Director was new to the position and not familiar with the UAS. Another two organizations initially expressed a willingness to participate, but did not respond to further communications. A fourth organization also expressed a willingness to participate in an interview, but at a time in the future due to the busyness of their schedule and so I decided to proceed with my interviews without their input. Eight organizations did not respond to my initial interview request. I was however able to successfully interview informants from 11 organizations; of these 11 organizations, two were category 1 informants, four were category 3 informants, and five were category 4 informants. See Table 2 for number of Aboriginal organizations by informant category and type. I chose not to do any further follow-up with the eight organizations who did not respond to my initial interview requests because after interviewing the 11 organizations who agreed to participate, I felt that I had reached a level of saturation. Saturation in qualitative research is attained when “very little new or surprising information” (Small, 2009, p. 25) is learned through informant interviews, and according to Small (2009) this should be one of the aims of qualitative research. The saturation I achieved may have been, in part, because as members of MVAEC, these organizations had collectively put forth recommendations to INAC for a new UAS beyond this most recent cycle, and most of them have taken a similar position on this issue.

Table 2 Number of Aboriginal Organizations by Category and Type

Aboriginal Informant Category	Aboriginal Informant Organization Type	Number of Aboriginal Informant Organizations
1)	Organizations who have considered, but never applied for UP program funding	2
2)	Organizations who have applied for, but never received UP program funding	0
3)	Organizations who have received UP program funding, but only in one or two years of this phase of the UAS	4
4)	Organizations who have received UP funding in all three years of this phase of the UAS	5

After reaching a point of saturation with urban Aboriginal organizations who were all MVAEC members, I decided to seek out organizations outside of MVAEC's membership that had received UP funding to see if their responses supported or diverged from that of the MVAEC members. My only option was to interview non-Aboriginal organizations and so I interviewed two non-Aboriginal not-for-profit agencies. I once again used purposive, non-random sampling to select these interview participants choosing one larger and one smaller organization. Finally I interviewed two federal government employees with knowledge of the UP program to gain some inside perspective on its goals, objectives and approach to program delivery.

Interview participants were given the option of whether or not they wanted to be identified in the study. Ten of the participants combined from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations consented to be identified, however three did not. Because of the small sample frame I was concerned that identifying some of my informants, through a process of elimination, could lead to the identities of those organizations who wished to remain confidential being revealed. I therefore chose not to identify any of the organizations who participated in my study. The two informants that I interviewed from the federal government also asked that their identities remain confidential.

I employed a qualitative research design for this phase of my study, using semi-structured interviews with open ended interview questions that allowed for the informants to be active participants in the conversations, and in turn help to guide the direction of the discussions. My intent was to gather rich and detailed qualitative data. In designing my interview questions it was important to recognize that not all questions may be necessary or appropriate for all agencies, and additional questions may be used, especially in response to information that arose in each interview. For example the questions that I asked differed depending on which category of informant the interview participant belonged to.

One organization did not consent to be audio recorded and so in their case I took detailed field notes, the remainder of the interviews were audio recorded and so I took limited field notes, instead relying on reviewing the audio recordings for data. I mainly relied on NVivo, a computerized qualitative analysis program, for transcribing my interviews. Two of my interviews were fully transcribed, and for the remainder I switched to a strategy of paraphrasing rather than doing complete transcriptions. This was a more

efficient use of my time, and because NVivo time stamps each section of the transcribed document, I was still able to quickly locate specific sections of audio if I choose to review them for greater detail at a later time.

I also used NVivo for coding and analysis of my interview transcripts. As described by Babbie & Benaquisto (2014), I began my analysis with open coding of the data with numerous patterns and themes identified. I then completed the data analysis with a process of focused coding, narrowing these themes and patterns down by combining some elements and eliminating others.

4.3 Content Analysis of Aboriginal Organization Documents

The final data source that I utilized for my research was to gather documents from the urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations that I interviewed. I conducted a content analysis of these sources, mainly annual reports, proposal applications, contracts, and budgetary documents to supplement the findings from my interviews. As I did not conduct a survey and my interviews were mainly focused on qualitative experiences (although I did ask some survey-like questions), I anticipated that these sources would be particularly useful for gathering quantitative data. According to Babbie & Benaquisto (2014), one of the main advantages to content analysis is that it saves time and money compared to conducting a survey, while accomplishing similar goals. Project proposals in particular were useful for me in clarifying the roles of partners and what their funding contributions were to each project. My ability to use these documents to compile descriptive statistics was however dependent on the willingness of organizations to provide me with such documents, and consistency of the content within the documents themselves. Nine out of thirteen organizations that I interviewed provided me with organizational documents of some sort, but I only received project proposals from seven organizations. Because this data was limited, rather than doing a results section solely devoted to analysis of these documents, I instead chose to weave this information into the narrative of my interview results.

The next two chapters will focus on the results of my study. Chapter 5 details the results of my content analysis of UAS documents and Chapter 6 presents the findings from informant interviews along with content analysis of organizations' documents.

Chapter 5. Results – Content Analysis of UAS Documents

This chapter demonstrates that there has been an increasing shift towards neoliberalism and an intensification of neoliberal principles over time within UAS policy and objectives. I will demonstrate this neoliberal evolution by examining documents from each cycle of UAS program delivery successively. While the UAS was first established in 1997, there were no funding contributions at that time to support community level projects, and therefore no programs were being delivered (INAC, 2010a). In my initial ATIP request to the Privy Council Office of Canada (PCO), I had requested documents from this time period, however because of the 90 day extension that was granted by the PCO I revised my request to exclude the years prior to the beginning of program delivery in hopes that it would speed up my request. I felt that it would be sufficient to focus on the years where UAS programs were actually being delivered as these would be the times when impacts on urban Aboriginal organizations would be most apparent. As such, this section does not focus in depth on analysis of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy prior to the implementation of UAS pilot projects in 2003.

On the surface it appears as though there have been three stages of UAS program delivery: a pilot phase, phase two, and the final phase which included the UP program. However, in reviewing UAS documents acquired from my ATIP request to INAC I have identified a fourth phase of UAS programming. Between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2014 there was an extension to the second phase of the UAS. Although there does not appear to have been any fanfare or major announcements concerning a policy shift for this extension of the UAS, this two year extension was a major turning point in how the UAS would come to be conceptualized and delivered in the most recent cycle, which was hailed as an “improved” Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

The body of this chapter will unfold in four sections each focusing on one of the four cycles of UAS program delivery: the pilot phase, phase two from 2007 until March of 2012, the extension to phase two, and finally the most recent cycle of the UAS that included the Urban Partnerships program. I will discuss each phase of the UAS and demonstrate to what extent each phase is compatible with neoliberal notions of governance and program delivery.

5.1 UAS Pilot Phase: April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2007

In this section I will examine the pilot phase of the UAS from April 1, 2003 until March 31, 2007. At this stage the UAS was the responsibility of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI), with on the ground delivery in Metro Vancouver managed by Western Economic Diversification Canada (INAC, 2010a). The pilot phase of the UAS was introduced at the tail end of the Chrétien Liberal government, the government which formally adopted neoliberalism into Canadian policy in 1994. As neoliberalism was already the standard for Canadian governance when the UAS was introduced, from its beginning it would always have been a product of neoliberal thinking. However, I would argue that at the time of its inception it adhered less strictly to neoliberal standards, allowing for certain flexibilities and employing a milder approach to neoliberalism.

Being the oldest stage of UAS program delivery, it is also unfortunately the stage for which the least amount of information is available. I did put in an ATIP request to the Privy Council Office of Canada, but the information that was provided to me was extremely limited. There were 469 pages of documents identified by the PCO, but many of those pages were excluded due to cabinet confidence. Of the 469 pages identified, only 99 were provided to me, but many of those pages were place holders simply stating, for example, that “pages 58 to 63 are withheld pursuant to section 69(1)(g)re: a of the Access to Information Act”, and so on (Privy Council Office [PCO], personal communication, March 21, 2017). Topics for discussion in this section will include items such as the origins and identified need for the UAS, the UAS having a broad objective for dealing with socio-economic barriers, an understanding that program objectives would take time to be accomplished while recognizing progress, the types of partners identified for project delivery, the amount of funding allotted to projects, and the level of program responsibility placed in the community.

According to the *Urban Aboriginal Strategy Pilot Projects Formative Evaluation Final Report*, the Government of Canada established the UAS as part of the 1997 *Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan*, which was itself a report in response to the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005). In order to fully comprehend UAS policy as it existed in this pilot phase then, one must first look to both the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP, 1996) as well as *Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal*

Action Plan (Ministry of Public Works and Government Services Canada [MPWGSC], 1997) to search for clues to its neoliberal origins.

The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* has itself been tied to neoliberal approaches to Aboriginal relations in Canada. Atleo (2008), for example, indicates that the language utilized in the RCAP report sets a dominantly neoliberal tone in discourses of Aboriginal economic development and community resurgence. There are five volumes of the RCAP report comprised of over 3,000 pages, however the discussion within the report on urban Aboriginal issues is relatively limited. A section on urban perspectives is however contained within chapter 7 of volume 4.

One of the key discussion points on urban Aboriginal issues that is relevant to the UAS is the financing of social programs for people living off Aboriginal territory (RCAP, 1996). The report acknowledged that historically there has been inequality in the provision of services provided to Aboriginal people living off-reserve as compared to on-reserve. This inequality has resulted from questions over jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments as there had been no consensus over which level of government is responsible for services to urban Aboriginal peoples. The report indicated that the federal government's position was that it only had a responsibility to status Indians living on-reserve. Although section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 allows the federal government to exercise jurisdiction over all Aboriginal people, they can choose not to exercise that responsibility. Up to this point, the federal government had maintained that the majority of supports for any Aboriginal people living off-reserve, including status Indians, were the responsibility of the provinces. However, provincial governments often argued that responsibility for Aboriginal peoples was under the jurisdiction of the federal government (RCAP, 1996). Provincial laws do apply to Aboriginal people just as they do all provincial residents, and therefore provinces could provide services to urban Indigenous people. However, these were mainly services provided to all provincial citizens and were not usually targeted specifically to urban Aboriginals.

Because of the discrepancies that existed over which level of government should be responsible for urban Aboriginal social programming, the RCAP report made recommendations on this issue (RCAP, 1996). It proposed that where numbers warranted, culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal people living off-reserve should

be provided as a responsibility of the provincial governments (RCAP, 1996, pp. 408-409). It did also state however that because of the socially and economically disadvantaged circumstances of many urban Aboriginal people, programs and services to support them would require enhancements in order to create parity with other Canadians, and responsibility for funding those enhancements should be shared between federal and provincial/territorial governments (RCAP, 1996, p. 413).

In response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the federal government issued *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* (MPWGSC, 1997). In this report the Government of Canada acknowledged a need to move beyond disputes over jurisdiction and responsibility in support of Aboriginal people in Canada. It recognized the need to respond to the socio-economic conditions faced by urban Aboriginal people, stating that the only way to effectively do this was to involve all stakeholders through partnerships, including with provincial governments and aboriginal groups (MPWGSC, 1997, "Urban Issues", para. 1). On one hand there was an acceptance of federal responsibility for urban Aboriginal people, which appears to be unique in this time period and could be seen to be a major step forward in taking ownership of this important issue, and in turn leading to the development of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. On the other hand, there also appeared to be limits to the level of responsibility that the federal government was willing to take, offloading some of the responsibility to the provinces and Aboriginal organizations themselves under the guise of partnerships. These are approaches that are characteristic of neoliberal governance.

Indeed many of the documents that were provided to me through my ATIP request to the Privy Council Office (which included internal memos, presentations, policy briefs, etc.) contained discussions on how to better involve provincial governments in urban Aboriginal policy (PCO, n.d.a; PCO, n.d.b; PCO, n.d.c; PCO, n.d.d; PCO, n.d.e). These documents expressed a desire for future provincial involvement, questioned how to bring the federal and provincial governments together on urban Aboriginal issues, and highlighted examples of successful intergovernmental partnerships such as the New Deal for Cities, which was designed to build federal and municipal partnerships in coordination with provincial governments. The most telling indicator that a major goal of the UAS was to create buy-in from provinces on urban Aboriginal issues came from a document simply titled *Métis Issues* which stated that, "The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was established in 1998 to improve policy development and program coordination with

provinces and territorial governments" (PCO, n.d.a). This statement implies that the building of partnerships with provinces was the intent of the UAS, perhaps as much or more so than the actual delivery of services to urban Aboriginal people in need.

A major goal for the UAS at this time was to build partnerships as a means for the federal government to encourage provincial governments to take greater responsibility for urban Aboriginal issues. However, it did also have clearly defined objectives for supporting urban Aboriginal people's socio-economic needs. Narrowing the socio-economic gap between urban Aboriginal people and the non-Aboriginal population was described as the ultimate objective of the UAS (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p. 4). This was initially to be accomplished through the delivery of funded projects in eight participating communities. Project based funding often narrowly prescribes the program content that is permitted within a project, as opposed to core funding (Scott, 2003), however at this stage of the UAS, project objectives appeared to be broad and quite flexible permitting any activities that would close "the gap in life chances between Urban Aboriginal people and the mainstream population" (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p. 56). Identifying specific types of projects to be undertaken at this stage of the UAS was considered to be premature, but examples of potential projects were quite broad including projects that focused on cultural pride, crime prevention, housing, and education (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p. 6). Although the project based funding model utilized by the UAS is indicative of a neoliberal approach to governance, in this pilot phase of project delivery it strayed from the tightly held controls on program content that might be expected from a neoliberal approach to program funding.

The UAS at this stage also demonstrated flexibility in terms of results and accountability. There were three main objectives for the UAS at this time:

1. Build organizational capacity within urban Aboriginal organizations, groups and communities at the local level in order to enhance community leadership;

2. Develop partnerships with provincial and municipal governments, urban Aboriginal organizations, groups and communities in order to engage in sustainable community development; and,

3. Coordinate federal government resources across departments in the Pilot Project cities in order to focus efforts on addressing the disparity

> between urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p. 4).

However, there was recognition that program objectives would not be fully achievable in the funding period for the pilot project phase, but that in the longer term progress could be made (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005). There did not yet appear to be an aggressive use of the outcomes-based thinking that emphasizes results and accountability, and normally accompanies neoliberal approaches to program design (Ilcan, 2009; Ready, 2012; Scott, 2003).

Outside the public lens however, internal documents showed that there was a belief that Aboriginal communities needed to be more accountable for their own socio-economic success, demonstrating compatibility with neoliberal notions of responsible citizenship. A document titled *Moving Forward on Aboriginal Policy* refers to Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which established that all Aboriginal Canadians, regardless of Indian status, enjoy certain undefined rights (PCO, n.d.b). There was concern that this rights based thinking was fueling a sense of entitlement, creating a culture of dependency as opposed to encouraging urban Aboriginal people to become self-sufficient (PCO, n.d.b, p.1).

One of the ways that the UAS sought to increase the involvement and accountability of Aboriginal communities, making them responsible for themselves and their socio-economic status, was through the creation of steering committees in each UAS community. In Metro Vancouver this resulted in the creation of the Greater Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (GVUAS) Steering Committee, which was composed of an equal number of government representatives and urban Aboriginal community members (MVUAS, 2010b). In general these steering committees were responsible for setting priorities, long-term strategic planning, and making decisions on project funding and how to target expenditures (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p.19). Placing some of the responsibility for planning and decision making in the hands of urban Aboriginal communities, as well as provincial and municipal government steering committee representatives, could be seen as a means for the federal government to distance itself from the UAS and place more responsibility on others. However, in general this approach was welcomed by Aboriginal leaders (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005). This illustrates an example where neoliberal approaches to program management can be compatible with Aboriginal

notions of self-determination. However, as these regional steering committees were making decisions that were subject to UAS terms and conditions, it is important to question how much responsibility was actually held at the local level.

Consistent with neoliberal approaches to project based funding, the amount of funding available per project was quite limited, even during the pilot phase of the UAS. The UAS was intended primarily to be a strategic initiative, and had a funding component that was relatively small (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, p. 26). Because of this it was stated that the leveraging of non-UAS funds was a critical component of longer-term success. Still, the average UAS contribution per project in Vancouver during the pilot phase was $156,388, and nationally the average UAS contribution per project was $806,459[1] (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005, pp. 38-39). In Vancouver these funding levels would prove to be the highest on average out of any phase of the UAS up until the program ended in 2017.

Even in its earliest stage of project delivery, the UAS was a product of neoliberal thinking and program design. Historically it followed the formal adoption of neoliberalism into Canadian policy in 1994, and it exhibited traits characteristic of neoliberalism such as offloading of government responsibility, encouraging partnerships to leverage funds, and calls for responsible citizenship. It however took a flexible approach in some areas such as allowing for broad variations in program content, and a relaxation of outcomes thinking. Although clearly tied to neoliberalism, the pilot phase of the UAS did not yet demonstrate the intense adherence to neoliberalism that would come to be seen in successive stages.

5.2 UAS Phase 2: April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2012

This section continues with content analysis of UAS documents specific to the second phase of program delivery which ran from April 1, 2007 until March 31, 2012. At this stage of program delivery, the OFI became responsible for all aspects of the UAS including on the ground service delivery through five regional offices, which in British Columbia included the BC OFI (INAC, 2010a). Regional steering committees remained

[1] The national average does appear to be skewed by an outlier as Edmonton only had 2 UAS funded projects with an average UAS contribution per project of $1,140,000. By removing Edmonton, the average UAS contribution per project becomes $153,454.

the main approach for the management and delivery of UAS projects locally as flexibility at the community level was still seen as foundational to the success of the UAS (INAC, 2010a), although by this time in the Metro Vancouver region the former GVUAS had evolved into the Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS) Steering Committee (MVUAS, 2010b). This cycle began under the minority government of Stephen Harper with a minor shift towards an intensified neoliberal approach becoming evident in UAS policy and delivery. Topics for discussion in this section will include narrowing the scope on permitted program content, an increased emphasis on responsible citizenship, the addition of the private sector, a priority for projects that can leverage a minimum of 50% in funding from other sources, a decrease in the average amount of funding provided, and the need for projects to have a sustainability plan while still permitting repeated applications for project funding.

With the advent of this second phase of the UAS, the stated objective had changed from narrowing the socio-economic gap between urban Aboriginal people and the mainstream population to having an objective “to promote self-reliance and increase life choices for Aboriginal people in urban centres” (INAC, 2010a, p. i). The UAS still supported improving the socio-economic conditions of urban Aboriginal people as this was a strategic outcome of the OFI that the UAS was in support of (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 2011). However, at this stage of the UAS a narrowing of the focus on program content became evident with priority areas becoming more narrowly prescribed, consistent with neoliberal approaches to project funding. UAS funded projects were now required to strategically focus on three priority areas: improving life skills; promoting job training, skills and entrepreneurship; and supporting Aboriginal women children and families (INAC, 2010a, p. 9). With these three priority areas there began a shift towards outcomes having more of a focus on employability, which would become a major focus in later stages of the UAS. However, according to an internal audit report the Terms and Conditions of the UAS provided no further clarity on the intent of these three UAS priority areas, or the types of activities that were eligible so there did remain some flexibility in the types of projects that were being delivered (INAC, 2010a, p. 9). Nonetheless, a shift towards a more targeted approach to program content began at this stage.

With this newly re-stated objective of the UAS there also became an intensified shift towards the neoliberal concept of responsible citizenship as the objectives of the

UAS now included promoting self-reliance for urban Aboriginal people (INAC, 2010a). In other words, there was a goal for urban Aboriginal people to become responsible for meeting their own needs. In order to meet this objective, one of the intended outcomes at this stage of the UAS was that, “Improvements in client socio-economic conditions are achieved, leading to increase [sic] self-sufficiency and less reliance on social programs” (AANDC, 2011, p. 3). Therefore one of the goals for urban Aboriginal self-reliance was to further offload the responsibility of the federal government to individuals themselves, and in the process save the government money. Regardless of the intent of the federal government, and whether it was motivated by self-serving notions such as offloading, and cost-savings, most people would probably agree that self-sufficiency for urban Aboriginal people is a good thing. However, considering the vast level of socio-economic inequality between urban Aboriginal people and the mainstream population, it is unrealistic to expect that urban Aboriginal self-sufficiency could have been accomplished in the short-term. It was this socio-economic inequality that was a motivating factor in the creation of the UAS in the first place.

Also in this stage of the UAS, there was an increased focus on leveraging funds to support project delivery indicating a heightened shift towards neoliberalism. As my literature review has shown, policies that encourage leveraged funding support neoliberal goals in that it reduces the funding contributions that governments must provide, placing more responsibility on community organizations to secure additional funding from elsewhere and form partnerships. Although creating partnerships was a stated objective of the previous pilot phase of the UAS, and leveraging additional funds was described as being critical to the program’s long-term success, program documents do not explicitly state that it had an objective for leveraging funds. That changed with this second phase of the UAS however as it became a requirement that all communities demonstrate a 50-50 commitment through financial or in-kind contributions from provinces and municipalities (INAC, 2010a, pp. 3-4). The UAS policy authority did not make it clear whether all projects were required to meet this target, or if it could be averaged out over the five years of program delivery in the community (INAC, 2010a, p.9). In Metro Vancouver, according to the MVUAS 2010-2012 Call for Proposals, priority was given to applicants that could demonstrate a minimum 50% contribution from municipal and provincial governments, as well as other funding partners (Appendix B). Although the MVUAS did assess applications based on demonstrated partnership

development, there was still no indication at this time that partnerships and leveraged funding were a requirement for individual projects to receive funding. This could have been a flaw in the wording of the proposal call, or it could have been that the MVUAS assumed that 50% in leveraged contributions would average out among all projects in Metro Vancouver over five years.

In addition to the UAS requiring that partners be a source of leveraged funding at the community level, there was now also an addition to the types of partners that should be targeted. Private industry partners were found to be an important contributor of leveraged funding, even if this was an unexpected accomplishment, and so partnerships with private industry were encouraged (AANDC, 2011). This is compatible with neoliberal ideas that the private sector will take on responsibility for social and economic development (Ilcan, 2009). In Metro Vancouver, the MVUAS formally acknowledged the private sector as a partner stating in the 2010-2012 Call for Proposals that, “Through the Strategy, the Government of Canada partners with Aboriginal and community organizations, the private sector, and municipal and provincial governments to support initiatives that respond to local priorities” (Appendix B, p. 1). On a national level, the private sector was also added to the list of eligible applicants in this phase of the UAS on the condition that UAS funded activities met the needs of urban Aboriginal communities and funding did not contribute to business profits (AANDC, 2011). A movement towards the inclusion of private industry in the delivery of the UAS was another indicator that the UAS was by this time incorporating more principles of neoliberalism into its program design.

An examination of the average funding level for UAS projects in Metro Vancouver shows a decrease in UAS contributions per project when compared to the pilot phase, which also signals a shift towards a more neoliberal approach to funding projects as neoliberal governments are known for funding projects at basic levels (Scott, 2003; Stern & Hall, 2015). In the pilot phase of the UAS, the average UAS contribution per project in Metro Vancouver was $156,388 (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005); whereas by fiscal year 2010-2011 the average UAS contribution per project for the year was $77,273 (MVUAS, 2010c). The average amount of UAS funding per project in this phase of the UAS was therefore approximately half of what it was in the pilot phase. However, an examination of the range of funding for the 2010-2011 fiscal year shows a minimum funding level of $12,213 for one project and a maximum of $177,359 for

another. Though the average amount of UAS funding per project decreased substantially in this phase of the UAS, the maximum amount of funding permitted was still relatively high. See Table 3 for summary of MVUAS funding in 2010/2011.

Table 3 MVUAS Project Funding for Fiscal Year 2010/2011

Organization	Project Title	Amount Funded
WISH	Peer Assistant Support & Training	$12,213
Richmond Youth Services Agency	RALLY	$66,014
Helping Spirit Lodge Society	Soaring Spirits Healing Program	$30,152
Urban Native Youth Association	Music, Arts & Culture Program	$77,779
SD 40	Aboriginal Retention Project	$17,350
Native Education College	Mathematics Program for Aboriginal Learners	$34,000
Métis Nation British Columbia	Skills Enhancement for Aboriginal Learners (SEAL)	$140,747
ACCESS	Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures	$135,386
ACCESS	BladeRunners	$177,359
Vancouver Native Health Society	IUALLP	$87,000
SD 37	Tree of Life – Urban Aboriginal Youth Project	$72,000
	Average Funding	$77,273

Source: http://www.mvuas.ca/Initiatives/initiatives-and-projects-for-2010-2011-fiscal-year.html

One final change that I will note for this stage of the UAS is that there was an evolution of the language surrounding goals for sustainability. The pilot phase of the UAS had an objective for engaging in sustainable community development (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., 2005), a statement that is relatively passive as there is no indication what should result from such engagement or even what is meant by sustainable community development. On the other hand, the language in phase two of the UAS became more active in describing the Strategy's sustainability goals with statements such as, "Sustained community capacity is achieved" and "Sustained partnerships and commitments to UAS objectives are developed" now describing the intended outcomes of the UAS (AANDC, 2011, p. 3). What was meant by sustainability became more defined as this was tied directly to capacity and partnerships, in turn allowing for outcomes to be measured. This greater emphasis on sustainability would have served neoliberal goals for project delivery as sustained community capacity and partnerships could be viewed as limiting the role of the federal government in the longer-term. Instead urban Aboriginal communities would become responsible for planning and

making decisions, and partnerships at all levels of government (i.e. provinces) would develop policies that reflected UAS priorities (AANDC, 2011, p. 3). In the Metro Vancouver Region, project sustainability was also a concern as the MVUAS 2010-2012 Call for Proposals indicated that applicants were required to submit a concept paper on project sustainability indicating how a project funded for fiscal year 2010/2011 could be strengthened or expanded in the following fiscal year (Appendix B). However, projects funded in 2010/2011 could reapply for funding in the 2011/2012 fiscal year, and in fact funding two year projects was considered a priority so there remained some flexibility in the UAS in Metro Vancouver allowing for repeated delivery offerings.

The initial five year period of phase two of the UAS, which lasted from April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2012, saw a gradual shift towards a heightened neoliberal approach to project delivery, while still maintaining some flexibility in certain areas. The call for urban Aboriginal people to become responsible citizens in taking care of their own needs that was seen in internal documents during the pilot phase was now embedded into policy objectives. This stage also saw private industry introduced as a potential partner, which is a strong indicator of neoliberal program design. Other areas such as program content, leveraged funds, project sustainability, and UAS funding levels did see incremental changes that were consistent with neoliberal governance, but still allowed for some flexibility, adhering less strictly to neoliberal principles than would be seen at future stages.

5.3 UAS Phase 2 Extension: April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2014

This section focuses on the extension of the second phase of the UAS lasting from April 1, 2012 until March 31, 2014, and which coincides with a majority electoral victory for the Harper government. During this stage, the BC OFI staff would be integrated into the operations of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada BC Region, now known as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) (INAC, n.d.a). Although an extension was acknowledged publicly at the time, it does not appear that any major announcements were made regarding changes to the program. Yet internal documents show that there was a shift in philosophy towards the program that I would categorize as a major intensification of neoliberal principles. Topics for discussion in this section will include a narrowing of the scope of permitted projects with increased focus on economic participation, a decrease in project budgets to reflect past

successes in leveraging funds, INAC distancing themselves from UAS responsibility while also questioning the ability of the Aboriginal community to take on a leadership role, and a philosophical shift that the program is not designed for INAC to deliver on outcomes, but rather to leverage change.

The 2012 extension of the UAS was announced publicly by the federal government with few changes noted. The most significant change that was announced was that the Government of Canada transferred three urban Aboriginal programs from Canadian Heritage to the UAS: the Aboriginal Friendship Centres Program, Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth and Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Urban Youth. The federal government indicated that this transfer would allow for better coordination in supporting urban and off-reserve Aboriginal people to increase their participation in the economy (INAC, 2013a). Although these programs were now housed within the UAS, it appears as though they were still managed as separate programs underneath the UAS umbrella (INAC, 2013b). Publicly, there was also some change to the wording around the desired outcomes of the UAS, but the stated outcomes were similar to previous cycles of the UAS including concepts such as targeting urban Aboriginal socio-economic needs, improving horizontal linkages within the federal government, and utilizing partnerships (INAC, 2013a). To accomplish these outcomes, the three exact same priority areas as the previous cycle of the UAS were noted: improving life skills; promoting job training, skills and entrepreneurship; and supporting Aboriginal women, children and families. Aside from these differences, I was unable to find any other public acknowledgement of changes to the UAS at this time, and so on the surface it looked very similar to the initial five year period of phase two of the Strategy. Behind the scenes however, internal documents painted a very different picture.

In previous phases of the UAS, the program objective was relatively broad allowing for funded projects to address community needs along the socio-economic spectrum. The initial five year cycle of phase two of the UAS did see a narrowing down of this objective with projects beginning to have more of a focus on employability, but some flexibility remained. However, by the time of the two year extension to phase two the UAS was to, “focus on a single objective of increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy” (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 4). With this singular focus, the types of projects that could be delivered would now be even more narrowly prescribed to include activities that would enhance urban Aboriginal people’s participation in the economy only. While

increasing the economic participation of urban Aboriginal people may be an admirable goal, and perfectly appropriate for some projects, this took away the choice for urban Aboriginal organizations and communities to focus UAS projects on other social needs without having to somehow tie it into economic development. This now singular objective was a major shift towards a fundamentally neoliberal approach to project funding where program content was tightly controlled by the funder with applicant organizations having to adapt to meet program criteria rather than the program remaining flexible to meet the community's needs.

At the same time as choices around program content were being limited for urban Aboriginal communities, the communities' role in the management and delivery of the UAS was also being questioned. Community oriented UAS Steering Committees, such as the MVUAS, were by this time viewed as one of the Strategy's greatest challenges (INAC, n.d.a, p. 4). The reasoning provided was that the urban Aboriginal community volunteers on these steering committees viewed their role as advisors to the funding allocation of individual projects, and this focus on funding limited the steering committees' ability to develop cross-governmental approaches. It should be noted that the federal government were themselves the ones who defined the role of steering committees, including making recommendations for funding allocations to OFI (INAC, 2010a, p. 3). Nonetheless urban Aboriginal committee members were seen as limiting the OFI's ability to bring partners to the table (INAC, n.d.a). This logic however contradicts with other internal documentation which indicates that successes over the previous five years resulted in provinces and municipalities entering into direct discussions with urban Aboriginal communities, which reduced the need for the federal government to facilitate such opportunities (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 14). That same document however also indicated that UAS Steering Committees were not viewed as necessary to engage the community in planning and priority setting as that could be accomplished through other means such as town hall gatherings, surveys, and focus groups (p. 9). Term limits for volunteer community members on steering committees in BC ended on March 31, 2012 and after that there were no ongoing strategic plans for these communities (INAC, n.d.a, p. 6). As McDonald (2011) warned that neoliberal governments can co-opt the arguments of Aboriginal communities to meet state objectives, the federal government used the steering committees' words against them stating that the committees themselves indicated that partnership development through

the UAS was an area in need of improvement (INAC, n.d.a, p. 5). Upon reflection the federal government felt that the structural design of the committees contributed to limited partnership development and success. As a result the OFI had planned to change the UAS Steering Committees to Urban Aboriginal Partners Networks. This demonstrates an example of how neoliberal governments can create the illusion of responsibility being placed in the hands of urban Aboriginal communities when in fact the government still holds decision making authority to make changes as they see fit.

With a plan in place to change the make-up of the UAS Steering Committees and remove decision making powers from urban Aboriginal communities themselves, this extension phase of the UAS also saw a shift from a city region model to a province-wide regional approach. During this period the British Columbia OFI implemented a hybrid regional approach with reduced Community Investment and Community Capacity funds in Metro Vancouver (as well as in Prince George, BC's other designated UAS site), and a new BC Regional Central fund created for fiscal year 2012-2013 (INAC, n.d.a, p. 1). This resulted in a 20% reduction in the budgets for each previously designated community, which was said to be reflective of the leveraging commitments over the previous five years. Although urban Aboriginal communities were being chastised for being a barrier to partnerships and leveraging funds, they were also being penalized for their success in leveraging additional funds by having their budgets reduced. This is clearly a contradiction within the policy, however reducing the budget in each community would serve a neoliberal purpose of offloading federal government responsibility to the community level with a greater reliance on partnerships to contribute funding to projects.

Much like the UAS Steering Committees were now seen as a barrier to partnerships, the designated city region model was viewed as posing a challenge to aligning policies and programming with provincial governments who were thought to be concerned with allocating their resources across provincial regions (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 7). At around this same time in 2011, the Government of BC had developed and implemented their own Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP), and the BC OFI was actively engaging with the Province of BC to ensure linkages between ORAAP and the UAS (INAC, n.d.a, p. 2). The province had not yet allocated financial resources or established a timeframe for implementation of the ORAAP, but the BC OFI viewed the UAS' transition to a province-wide regional approach as a potential negotiation tool that could be used to influence the Province of BC to finally designate financial resources

towards a coordinated UAS-ORAAP approach. The shift from a city regional based approach to a provincial approach for the UAS therefore ultimately served a neoliberal purpose with intent to better leverage funds and in-turn offload responsibility for urban Aboriginal issues to provincial governments. This extension period, according to internal documentation, was a transition period intended to moderate the impact of the implementation of a provincial regional approach on individual communities (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 7). It appears as though the main reason for granting a two year extension to phase two of the UAS, as opposed to renewing the strategy for another cycle altogether, was to facilitate this transition to a province-wide approach.

On the one hand the federal government was taking away responsibility and authority for the UAS from urban Aboriginal communities so that the Government of Canada could better lead negotiations with the provinces. Yet on the other hand, this stage of the UAS had a seemingly contradictory objective for Aboriginal communities and individuals to become more self-reliant. Internal documentation stated that UAS funding was meant to assist urban Aboriginal communities to become self-reliant in building partnerships, and reduce their dependency on the federal government for facilitation and leadership (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 7). This approach appears flawed to me as I question how decreasing the role of urban Aboriginal communities at decision making tables while more narrowly prescribing their required activities could increase their self-reliance. However such a policy would meet neoliberal objectives for responsible citizenship with the federal government offloading responsibility for urban Aboriginal needs to communities themselves. In an almost parental and scolding tone, one internal policy document stated that, “the urban Aboriginal community needs to come prepared to lead or risk being led to a place that does address their needs” (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 11). In other words, if urban Aboriginal communities could not show leadership in determining their own needs, the federal government would decide what was in their best interest as a form of Aboriginal tutelage, which according to Dyck (1997) has historically been embedded into INAC policy. It was claimed that the UAS supported the building of leadership capacity for urban Aboriginal communities, but it is ironic that urban Aboriginal communities were being told that they must take on a greater leadership role while the federal government was simultaneously diminishing urban Aboriginal communities’ authority and decision making ability within the UAS governance structure.

There was a contradictory tone in much of the policy at this stage of the UAS as the federal government appeared to be attempting to limit their own role in the UAS and responsibility for urban Aboriginal issues, while at the same time maintaining absolute decision making authority for themselves. For example one internal document stated that, “The UAS is partnership, and because of that fact no one partner owns it, but one can lead it” (AANDC, n.d.a, p.3). Of course the partner that was identified as the lead was the Government of Canada. In BC, regional policy emphasized the need to move away from the UAS being seen solely as an OFI initiative so that they could create buy-in from other partners (INAC, n.d.a, p. 5). By abandoning any concept of ownership of the UAS, the federal government was demonstrating a neoliberal approach to governance as they were limiting their own responsibility for the program, yet they maintained that they were the lead so that they could continue to control its direction.

This two year extension to phase two of the UAS also appeared to be reflective of a major philosophical change in how outcomes for the program should be conceived, or at least, the federal government was providing clarification as to how the UAS should have always been understood (AANDC, n.d.a). The UAS was to be viewed as a strategy not a program (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 10). Internal documentation indicated that the greatest source of confusion around the funding available to recipients through the UAS was that it was not intended to directly deliver on socio-economic outcomes, and that its only purpose was to leverage change (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 3) . As such the Performance Measurement Strategy was not concerned with clients served or changes to their socio-economic conditions; that was to be the concern of the UAS partners that delivered the services. Contributions to support the UAS were designed to build partnerships, which were seen as creating the environment for enhancing urban Aboriginal socio-economic outcomes (AANDC, n.d.a, p. 8). Therefore it appears as though the main goal for the UAS was to build partnerships to “leverage change” i.e. leverage funds which would contribute to enhanced socio-economic outcomes for urban Aboriginal people. The UAS was by design a neoliberal approach to leveraging funds from elsewhere.

Although I would characterize this stage of the UAS overall as representing a major shift towards an intensified neoliberal approach to federal government funding, there were still some elements of the Strategy that were not as tightly held to neoliberal principles to the extent that would be seen in the final stage of the UAS. For example project assessment guidelines indicated that Development Officers were to assess

applications by asking questions about partnerships, leveraged funds, and what is next after the project is over (sustainability) (AANDC, n.d.b). However, even though these elements of the UAS were clearly stated goals for the program, the language in the assessment guidelines still did not indicate that these were required elements. As well, operational guidelines indicated that applications must include, “if applicable – description of how the activity has evolved from previous years, and/or why the activity is to be continued and/or repeated” (INAC, 2012, p. 5). This implies that even though applications were assessed for sustainability, repeated delivery of projects was allowed. Flexibility was also allowed in negotiating projects that were unique or had a specific local impact, as long as activities resulted in reduced barriers to economic participation (INAC, 2012, p. 10). At this stage of the UAS there remained some flexibility that strayed from the normally tightly held controls of neoliberal project funding.

The two year extension to phase two of the UAS from April 1, 2012 until March 31, 2014 was characterized by a major intensification of neoliberal principles within the Strategy’s policy and was marked by a number of contradictions. The federal government further distanced itself from the UAS by claiming it was a partnership that was owned by no one, while still maintaining tight decision making control as the Strategy’s lead. Urban Aboriginal communities, who had previously been given decision making responsibility, were stripped of that responsibility as UAS Steering Committees were phased out for being a barrier to building partnerships. Yet the Government of Canada acknowledged successes in partnership building over the previous five years and decreased program budgets to reflect that success. Urban Aboriginal communities were also being told to become more responsible for UAS leadership, while simultaneously being stripped of responsibility at the governance level. There was also a shift from city regions to a province-wide regional approach so that the federal government could better negotiate with provincial governments to leverage funds and offload responsibility to them. There did remain some flexibilities around individual project assessment, such as allowing for repeated program delivery and gaps in the language that did not outright state partnerships and leveraged funds were required, but those flexibilities would be eliminated in the next cycle of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

5.4 UAS Urban Partnerships Program: April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2017

This section will focus on the most recent cycle of the UAS, which ran from April 1, 2014 until March 31, 2017 and was announced with much fanfare using terms such as “improved” and “more efficient”. This phase continues on with the intensive neoliberalization of program policies and objectives that was seen in the extension of the previous cycle, while being more transparent about this shift. As was seen in the previous section, few changes to the UAS were announced publicly in the two year extension to phase two, even though behind the scenes major changes to program policy were being implemented. With this most recent cycle, many of the aforementioned changes were now in the public record. Topics in this section will include a now singular focus on increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy, the requirement for partner contributions and a sustainability plan, term-limited funding of one year, reduced maximum funding amounts, and INAC continuing to distance itself from responsibility by now funding the Aboriginal Friendship Centres to administer project funds, taking away the responsibility from the local community in the process.

On February 6, 2014 the Government of Canada announced the renewal of the UAS, which they were touting as a new, “improved” Urban Aboriginal Strategy (INAC, 2014a). This new UAS saw some fundamental changes to its design and the way it was to be administered. The first major change of note was that four previous Government of Canada programs (Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Urban Youth, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth, and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy program) were consolidated into two new programs: Urban Partnerships (UP) and Community Capacity Support (INAC, 2014b) under the banner of the UAS. The Community Capacity Support program was to provide core-like funding to Friendship Centres and other urban Aboriginal organizations, as well as wage subsidies for summer student employment and skills development (INAC, 2014c), and so likely replaced the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program and Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Urban Youth program, which respectively had similar objectives (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., n.d.). The UP program was to provide investments in projects that increased urban Aboriginal people’s participation in the economy (INAC, 2014c) likely replacing the previous Urban Aboriginal Strategy program and the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth Program, which both provided project-based funding.

Because funding contributions for the previous UAS were project-based, and the UP program offered project funding that I believe likely replaced the previous UAS program I have chosen to study only the Urban Partnerships component of this stage of the UAS.

The reason provided for the consolidation of programming under the umbrella of the new UAS was that it supposedly created improvements through greater efficiency and reduced duplication of services (GOC, 2014). It was said that this consolidation would result in a reduced administrative burden, but it is not clear who was to benefit from this reduced burden. Many of my informants from participant interviews (which will be covered in greater depth in the next chapter) indicated that their reporting requirements were quite burdensome, and so it seems likely that the reduced administrative burden was to benefit the federal government. This consolidation of programming and reduced administrative burden for the federal government would serve neoliberal purposes which value smaller government. Consolidating four different programs from two different departments (Canadian Heritage and INAC) under the umbrella of a singular Urban Aboriginal Strategy within one department (INAC) would accomplish that goal of smaller government. It was also stated that this consolidation of programming would result in savings that would be reinvested into urban Aboriginal community projects and programs (GOC, 2014) implying that more money would be available for projects at the community level. However it should be noted that through the UP program applicants could only apply for one project, and in British Columbia the Call for Applications from the 2014/2015 fiscal year indicated that organizations that submitted multiple applications for UP funding would actually be excluded from consideration (NAFC, 2014). Therefore, instead of more community programming the new UAS had the potential to diminish programming within individual organizations. Whereas organizations could previously receive funding for separate projects through the preceding UAS program and the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth Program, they could now only be funded for one project through the UP program of the UAS.

In this stage of the UAS, there were also major changes to the way that the budget for the UP program would be distributed and the role that the federal government would play. There was an annual contribution amount of $53.1 million to support the new UAS, $30 million of which was to support the UP program (INAC, 2014b). $20 million in UP contributions was provided to the National Association of Friendship Centres to administer for project funding, while $10 million was retained by INAC to support

collaboration with provincial governments and other stakeholders (AANDC, n.d.c). The $20 million in funding that the NAFC received was in turn distributed to their Provincial/Territorial Association (PTA) regional affiliates who administered the funding for projects in each region (NAFC, n.d.). In British Columbia it was the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) who administered the funding for UP projects. This is important because as Stern & Hall (2015) note, neoliberal governments often administer funding through a quasi-independent agency, such as the NAFC and their regional affiliates, in order to distance themselves from social program delivery and as a result absolve themselves of responsibility for program failures. That INAC was no longer responsible for UAS projects was reinforced in the *UAS Implementation Guide to Support AANDC Regional Offices*[2] (AANDC, n.d.c) which stated that, "AANDC no longer has a role in investing in projects that achieve UAS objectives" (p. 13) and, "Regions [are] no longer in the business of project based funding" (p. 17). Internal communications show that all responsibility for UAS project funding was now considered to be the domain of the NAFC and their regional PTAs, and not the responsibility of INAC.

The choice to have the NAFC administer project dollars through their regional PTAs was likely aligned with INAC's goal for the UAS to be provincial in scope, which was another way for the federal government to meet neoliberal objectives of greater collaboration with provinces in order to offload responsibility to them. As was seen in the two year extension to phase two of the UAS, a shift began from a city regional focus to a province-wide regional focus. This shift was completed with the BCAAFC now administering the UP project dollars in British Columbia because the BCAAFC as an organization is provincial in scope. That point was highlighted in an internal document, which identified the BCAAFC as one of only two organizations in BC who serve the urban Aboriginal population at the provincial level (INAC, n.d.b, p. 15). The other organization identified was the Métis Nation British Columbia, however they would not likely have been considered as a candidate to administer UP project funding because they serve only Métis people. The BCAAFC, like their parent organization the NAFC, is a status blind organization meaning that they serve all Aboriginal people regardless of

[2] AANDC or Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is the former name of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Indian status, and that was listed as one of the reasons that the NAFC was chosen to administer UAS funds (INAC, 2015, p. 2).

With the federal government no longer responsible for administering project based funds, it appears that their role was limited to building partnerships, especially with the provinces and territories. A major emphasis of the new UAS was to work with provincial and territorial governments to align their approaches and develop common strategies for addressing urban Aboriginal issues (AANDC, n.d.c, p. 18). Negotiating partnerships with provincial governments was an ongoing concern of the UAS, which could be seen to serve a neoliberal purpose of offloading federal responsibilities for urban Aboriginal issues to provinces and territories. Dating back to the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* there were questions over who had jurisdiction for addressing the needs of urban Aboriginal people (RCAP, 1996). It appears that by this stage of the UAS the federal government still held the position that provincial governments had greater responsibility for urban Aboriginal people as the *Urban Aboriginal Strategy Guidebook for Regional Planning* indicated that, “The reality is that provincial governments hold responsibility and most of the key levers for off-reserve planning and initiatives to address urban Aboriginal issues” (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., n.d., p. 4). Nonetheless by this stage of the UAS, in British Columbia there appeared to be buy-in from the provincial government as their Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan was tied into the UAS. According to the BC Government, in the 2015/2016 fiscal year a total of $761,000 was invested in the combined ORAAP/UAS in BC with INAC investments totaling $376,000 and investments from the provincial government totaling $385,000 (BC Government, n.d. p. 3). Although only a difference of $9,000, by this time it appears as though the BC Government was making the greater contribution to urban Aboriginal programming in BC. I believe Provincial governments should share responsibility with the federal government for urban Aboriginal people considering that the majority of Aboriginal people in Canada live off-reserve. There is a need for support and while the federal government has limited their funding for off-reserve Aboriginal people, provincial governments have substantial financial resources, so to see commitment from the provincial government for urban Aboriginal programming is a positive sign. I however hope that this does not lead to the federal government reducing their funding commitments for urban Aboriginal programming to reflect success in leveraging funds from the provinces, as was the case in the extension to phase two of

the UAS when UAS communities in BC had their budgets reduced by 20% to reflect their success in leveraging funds.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis project and its focus on project based funds, I do not intend to go into any greater detail on the federal government's new role in collaborating with provinces and territories for this stage of the UAS. I will just add that with the federal government moving away from administering the project funding directly, and the addition of the NAFC and their regional affiliates to take on this responsibility, it signalled the end for UAS steering committees, at least in Metro Vancouver where the MVUAS Steering Committee no longer existed. According to an internal regional planning document, the UAS was to continue to support community engagement in existing UAS communities, and that process could continue with the existing steering committees or take on some other form, but it also stated clearly that planning groups would no longer have any role in making funding recommendations for the allocation of UAS funds (Alderson-Gill & Associates Consulting Inc., n.d., p. 6). Although neoliberal governments indicate that they desire for communities to be enabled to become responsible for their own needs, when that responsibility is questioned or does not meet other government objectives neoliberal governments do not hesitate to remove that responsibility from the community level as they maintain the ultimate decision making authority.

In examining public documents and guidelines for the UAS and more specifically the UP program at this stage of the UAS, a shift towards a more intensely neoliberal approach to project based funding becomes apparent, and appears to be communicated to the public in a more transparent way. For example, in the extension to phase two of the UAS, internal documents did indicate that the UAS was to now focus on a singular objective of increasing urban Aboriginal people's participation in the economy (AANDC, n.d.a), however publicly the goal for the UAS was still described in broader socio-economic terms (INAC, 2013a). By the time of the UP program however, numerous public documents described the objective of the UAS as being to increase urban Aboriginal participation in the economy (INAC, 2014b; INAC, 2014c; BCAAFC, n.d.), and one document in particular stated this as a requirement as UP expenditures would only be eligible for projects that advanced urban Aboriginal people's economic participation (BCAAFC, n.d.). This more narrowly prescribed approach to project funding that is characteristic of neoliberalism was now unabashedly announced to the public, perhaps

because by this time Stephen Harper's Conservatives were more secure in their majority government and as Brody (2007) notes, Harper had a "long held conviction that the federal government should get out of the social policy field altogether" (p. 94). Neoliberal governments instead value individuals caring for their own needs through responsible citizenship and so supporting urban Aboriginal people's participation in the economy would be reflective of the goal for individualization, more so than a broader social objective as was seen in earlier stages of the UAS.

Within this more narrowly prescribed objective for the UP program, goals for project delivery also became more tightly specified, which was reflective of a heightened neoliberal approach to project based funding where program content is tightly controlled by the funder (Scott, 2003). Although project applications were assessed against certain required program elements in previous stages of the UAS such as partnerships, leveraged funding and plans for sustainability, there did not appear to be any definitive language indicating that projects that did not include these elements would be excluded from consideration. This may have allowed for some flexibility in permitting projects to be delivered that did not meet all of the UAS' goals for program delivery, but were perhaps better suited to individual organizations' mandates and objectives. That changed with this stage of the UAS and UP program however as program elements became mandatory with an emphasis on what projects "must" contain clearly highlighted in program guidelines (BCAAFC, n.d.; INAC, 2014c). The flexibility that was seen in the project guidelines for previous stages of the UAS was now gone.

One of the program elements that was now explicitly required was the inclusion of partnerships. Although developing partnerships was always a goal of the UAS, the emphasis on including partners at this stage became so great that it was actually incorporated into the program's name – Urban Partnerships. Program information that was provided along with the Call for Proposals in the BC region indicated that the focus of the UP program was the development of partnerships and in order to be eligible, projects were now required to demonstrate one or more out of three partnership commitments (BCAAFC, n.d.). These partnership commitments included the following:

- A partner or other stakeholder committed to continuing funding support to the project or initiative after the Urban Aboriginal Strategy provides short-term bridge or phased-approach funding;

- A partner or other stakeholder committed to considering the recommendations of a feasibility study, performance evaluation, or other analysis of findings that will result in a change in policy, program, service delivery or investments;
- A partner or other stakeholder committed to considering the adoption of the findings of an engagement, assessment, progress, research, evaluation, framework or other such directional documentation on urban Aboriginal matters (BCAAFC, n.d., “Partnerships”, para. 2).

As was demonstrated in my literature review, the neoliberal concept of responsible citizenship also extends to organizations that are expected to take on responsibility for citizens’ needs (Ilcan, 2009; Stern & Hall, 2015). The requirement for partnerships in the UP program appeared to be reflective of the goal for other organizations and levels of government to make a commitment to take on responsibility for advancing urban Aboriginal economic development, offloading responsibility of the federal government in the process. Under neoliberal models of governance, partnerships are also called upon to leverage funds from elsewhere, and leveraging additional funds was another goal for partnerships in the UP program. Program information for the UP shows that activities and outputs included supporting projects that attracted additional investments from other stakeholders, and leveraging resources and attracting investments were among the expected results (BCAAFC, n.d.).

An additional goal for partnerships was that they would lead to project sustainability, and another one of the new requirements for the UP program was that projects would now be required to demonstrate a plan and/or partnership that would sustain the momentum generated by the UP investment (INAC, 2014c). This was once again reflective of neoliberal goals for responsible citizenship as organizations and their partners were expected to become responsible for the ongoing delivery of projects to support urban Aboriginal participation in the economy. Unlike previous stages of the UAS where repeated delivery was allowed and in some instances even prioritized (as was the case in BC during phase two of the UAS), the UP program was not intended to provide ongoing operational support, or support programs that were deemed to be already successful especially as a repetitive delivery offering (INAC, 2014c). In other words, UP funding had become term-limited to one year, which is characteristic of neoliberal approaches to project funding which according to Scott (2003) tends to be short-term with no guarantee of renewal.

My final argument that the UP program was representative of an intensified neoliberal approach to project delivery is that there was an extremely limited amount of funding available for projects. The maximum amount of project funding permitted in the UP program was lower than any previous stage of the UAS with funding in Metro Vancouver capped at $85,000 (BCAAFC, n.d.), although fiscal year 2015/2016 saw projects funded up to $91,000 due to slippage in the region. This is compared to an average funding amount of $156,388 per project in Metro Vancouver during the pilot phase of the UAS, and a maximum amount of $177,359 being provided to one project during phase two of the UAS in Metro Vancouver[3]. See Table 4 for comparison of funding amounts by each phase of the UAS in Metro Vancouver. As well, one of the expenses that is commonly permitted through project funding is administration costs; this is normally used to cover expenses incurred by an organization to deliver a project such as a portion of the Executive Director's salary, supplies required for project administration, and financial accounting. In the two year extension to phase two of the UAS an administrative fee of 15% was permitted (INAC, 2012), however the administration fee permitted for UP projects in Metro Vancouver during this stage of the UAS only allowed for costs up to 5% of the total budget (BCAAFC, n.d.). This is 1/3 of what was previously allowed for administration costs. These reduced funding levels would be reflective of neoliberal governance as projects are only funded for basic amounts with an expectation that additional funds be secured from elsewhere, with organizations and their partners taking on greater responsibility for program delivery while the federal government reduces their contributions. As Scott (2003) indicates, project based funding, which is characteristic of neoliberal governance, limits the fees available for administration and other costs necessary for organizational sustainability. In the case of the UP program, these administration fees became extremely limited with an expectation that organizations and their projects sustain themselves in the long-term.

Table 4 UAS Funding Comparison by Phase in Metro Vancouver

Pilot Phase	Phase 2	Phase 2 Extension	Urban Partnerships
Average Funding: $156,388	Maximum Funding: $177,359	Unknown	Capped Funding: $85,000

Note: UP projects funded in fiscal year 2015/2016 were capped at $91,000 due to slippage in the region.

[3] I was not able to secure any data on funding amounts for the two year extension to phase two of the UAS in Metro Vancouver.

This most recent stage of the UAS from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017, which included the Urban Partnerships program, saw a final, heightened shift in the Strategy's neoliberal evolution. Consolidation of programming under the UAS resulted in smaller government, while INAC also distanced itself from the responsibility of project administration, placing that responsibility in the hands of the NAFC and their regional affiliates instead. The shift from a city regional approach to a province-wide regional approach that began in the previous stage of the UAS was now complete as the federal government focussed their efforts on building partnerships with the provinces and territories. As well, local Steering Committees had their decision making authority removed in favor of the NAFC's PTAs who were seen as better suited to administer projects due to their provincial scope. Flexibilities around project delivery that existed in previous stages of the UAS were now removed as goals and objectives became stated more explicitly and became a requirement, such as only funding projects that increased urban Aboriginal people's participation in the economy, that contained partnerships, and that demonstrated plans to sustain a project's ongoing momentum without continued UAS support. Yet in spite of tighter controls on project content, the amount of funding available for project delivery was reduced as organizations were expected to leverage funds from elsewhere to fully meet their projects' needs.

5.5 Chapter Summary

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was first established in 1997 with pilot projects beginning to be delivered in 2003 under the majority Liberal government of Jean Chrétien. This was the government that first adopted neoliberalism into Canadian policy in 1994, and since then neoliberalism has always been the dominant form of governance in Canada (Stern & Hall, 2015). Based on this timeline, the UAS would therefore always have been a product of neoliberal thinking, however as the UAS evolved over various government administrations it began to adhere more strictly to neoliberal principles culminating in the most recent stage of the UAS, which included the Urban Partnerships program. The second phase of the UAS was introduced under the minority conservative government of Stephen Harper who was known to hold convictions that the federal government should move away from its involvement in social policy (Brodie, 2007). This may have played a role in the intensification of neoliberal approaches to project delivery at this stage of the UAS, although with the Conservatives holding a minority government

it is possible that they did not want to change the UAS too drastically, which resulted in incremental changes only. By the time of the two year extension to phase two of the UAS, Harper and his Conservatives held a majority government and the UAS began to see a major shift towards intensified neoliberal approaches to project delivery within policy; the two year extension was likely granted to ease this transition and perhaps minimize the potential backlash over major changes that were yet to come. Finally, the most recent stage of the UAS, which included the UP program, was ushered in under the majority Harper government, demonstrating the strictest adherence to neoliberal principles in UAS programming to date.

The UAS was initially developed in response to the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, which recommended that provincial and territorial governments take responsibility for off-reserve Aboriginal programming where numbers warrant, i.e. in urban areas (RCAP, 1996). Although Canada's official response to the RCAP, *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, acknowledged the federal government's need to respond to the socio-economic conditions of urban Aboriginal people, it also indicated that the only way to effectively do so was for governments to work together (MPWGSC, 1997). Much of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy over the years appears to be about getting the provinces and territories to take the greater responsibility for urban Aboriginal issues, as was recommended in the RCAP report. This could be regarded as different levels of government sharing responsibility, but the limited amount of funding that is available to UAS projects and the requirements for leveraging additional funds also suggest offloading of federal government responsibility that is characteristic of neoliberal governance. Provincial and territorial governments absolutely should bear some of the responsibility for urban Aboriginal issues, but that does not alleviate this responsibility from the federal government. Urban Aboriginal communities should be cautious that greater responsibility from provincial and territorial governments on urban Aboriginal issues does not result in the federal government reducing their funding for urban Aboriginal programming, or worse eliminating their support altogether. The next chapter will focus on the experiences of urban Aboriginal community organizations as they navigated project delivery under the UP program of the UAS with its stricter adherence to neoliberal principles.

Chapter 6. Interview Findings and Organizational Document Analysis

6.1 Introduction and Informant Demographics

The previous chapter demonstrated that as the UAS evolved over time it adhered more and more closely to neoliberal principles of governance and program delivery. This chapter will explore how that neoliberal evolution of the UAS impacted urban Aboriginal organizations as they navigated delivery of the UP program. The focus of this chapter will be on the findings from interviews with urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, and federal government employees, as well as the content analysis of documents that were provided to me as part of the interview process. It is in this chapter that I will ultimately try to answer my research question: How has a shift towards increasingly neoliberal government policies impacted Aboriginal organizations and their ability to deliver and sustain projects under the Urban Partnerships program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver from fiscal years 2014/2015 to 2016/2017?

My original goal for this stage of my research was to interview urban Aboriginal organizations who had received UP funding, applied for UP funding, or may have considered it. I identified 23 organizations who were all members of the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, and although I was open to the possibility of interviewing all 23 member organizations of MVAEC, after conducting 11 interviews I felt that I had reached a point of saturation. MVAEC with input from their member organizations had submitted to INAC recommendations for renewal of the UAS, and I believed that it was possible that because all 11 of my interview participants were MVAEC members they were collectively taking the same or a similar stance on UAS issues. I therefore decided to interview two additional organizations outside of MVAEC who had received UP funding to determine how their responses compared. I was not able to identify any additional urban Aboriginal organizations outside of MVAEC who had received UP funding in Metro Vancouver, and so I interviewed two non-Aboriginal not-for-profit organizations who had received funding for UP projects. This also provided me with some valuable insight as to how the experience of non-Aboriginal organizations who received UP funding compared to that of Aboriginal organizations. Finally, I wanted to interview informants who had insight into how the funding flowed from INAC through the

NAFC and BCAAFC into Metro Vancouver, and I was able to secure interviews with two federal government employees with knowledge of the funding administration process.

As I have chosen not to identify any of my informants, I have instead identified them in this section by categorizing them by the type of organizations that they belonged to: Aboriginal Informant, Non-Aboriginal Informant, and Federal Government Informant. I then assigned an alphabetical identifier to each informant based on the order in which they appeared in this results section. For example the first Aboriginal informant to be referenced became Aboriginal Informant A, the second became Aboriginal Informant B; the first non-Aboriginal informant referenced became Non-Aboriginal Informant A and so on. In some cases more than one person per organization participated in their interview with me, and there were other cases where after conducting the interview it was recommended that I follow-up with questions to another person within the organization. In cases where I received input from multiple people within an organization I collectively grouped their responses together as a single 'organizational' informant.

All of the organizations that I interviewed, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were non-profits. There was a diverse range of organizations, although all could be identified as having a primary purpose of providing a community or social service. Aboriginal organizations ranged in size from less than 10 to over 100 employees, and had budgets that ranged from $650,000 to $12,000,000. The average budget for Aboriginal organizations was $5,705,000. The two non-Aboriginal organizations that I interviewed ranged in size from the mid-teens to almost 300 employees, and had budgets that ranged from $500,000 or less to almost $30,000,000. Although one of the non-Aboriginal organizations that I interviewed had a budget and staffing compliment that was more than double than that of the largest Aboriginal organizations in my study and a budget that was more than four times the average for Aboriginal organizations, the other non-Aboriginal organization had the smallest budget of my sample indicating that Aboriginal identity alone was not an indicator of organizational size or capacity to deliver programming. Out of the 13 organizations that I interviewed, six indicated that they received some form of core funding, six indicated that they received no core funding, while one organization gave no indication of whether or not they received core funding. Therefore half of the organizations who indicated whether or not they received core funding did not receive any and relied primarily on project based funding to sustain their organizations. Of the six organizations that indicated that they received core funding, five

indicated the value of that core funding which ranged from 17% to 56% of their total annual operating budgets. For organizations that received core funding, it made up 44% of their annual operating budget on average, and even these organizations relied heavily on project based funding to meet their programming objectives. All organizations, including the non-Aboriginal organizations, identified as serving a large Aboriginal clientele. See Table 5 for a profile summary of informant organizations.

Table 5 Informant Organizations Profile Summary

Informant Organization	Range of Employees	Annual Budget	Core Funding	Source of Core Funding
Aboriginal A	21 - 50	$10 - 15 million	$5 - 10 million	Federal
Aboriginal B	51 - 99	$10 - 15 million	Yes	Provincial
Aboriginal C	21 - 50	$5 - 10 million	No	
Aboriginal D	Less than 10	$500,000 - $1 million	$100,000 - $1 million	Federal
Aboriginal E	21 - 50	$5 – 10 million	No	
Aboriginal F	Less than 10	$500,000 - $1 million	No	
Aboriginal G	51 - 99	$1 - 5 million	$1 - 5 million	Provincial
Aboriginal H	100 - 199	$1 - 5 million	No	
Aboriginal I	21 - 50	Unknown	No	
Aboriginal J	100 - 199	$5 - 10 million	$1 - 5 million	Provincial
Aboriginal K	Less than 10	$1 - 5 million	No	
Non-Aboriginal A	10 - 20	$500,000 or less	$100,000 or less	Municipal; Provincial
Non-Aboriginal B	200 - 300	$20 – 30 million	Unknown	

6.2 Transition to the Urban Partnerships Program

As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the two year extension to phase two of the UAS was granted, at least in part, to ease the transition to a provincial approach to delivering the UAS and moderate the impacts on local communities. On the surface the two year extension period looked very similar to the five year cycle that immediately preceded it, but internal documents showed that a major shift towards an intensified neoliberal approach to project delivery was taking place. Had this period been successful at easing this transition to new approaches, organizations who received UAS funding would have had some sense of the changes that were to come, but for the most part that does not appear to be the case.

In discussing the UAS prior to the most recent cycle which included the UP program, my informants were all very aware of program differences such as projects in previous stages being less focused on economic participation and allowing for a greater

focus on other needs such as culture and safety. Some organizations that were not successful in securing UP funding over multiple years indicated that they were previously able to receive UAS funding annually, suggesting that the proposal assessment process had become more stringent and there was greater competition for available dollars. Other differences mentioned were that partnerships were not required in previous incarnations of the UAS and that project budgets were much higher in the earlier phases, with one Aboriginal informant indicating that they normally received about $175,000 per project (Aboriginal Informant A). Although all informants had an awareness that the UAS was different prior to the transition to the UP program, most did not indicate that they sensed the gravity of the coming changes. Rather they described the shift from a community based approach to a province-wide regional model, which was to serve a neoliberal purpose of offloading responsibility to provincial governments, as being sudden and disruptive.

This shift to a provincial regional approach was marked by an announcement at a community meeting in early 2014 that the BCAAFC, via funding from the NAFC, would be administering UAS dollars across British Columbia, including to the community of Metro Vancouver. Several respondents, including one federal government informant (Federal Government Informant A), described this meeting as tension filled as the Aboriginal community organizations in Metro Vancouver were shocked and angered by this decision. One Aboriginal informant who had received UAS funding prior to the transition to the UP program described the response to this announcement as follows:

> Many of us in the urban Native community in Vancouver were surprised and even shocked when the funding was administered by the National Association of Friendship Centres. We thought it would be better placed with a more localized group, MVAEC in particular. So that was kind of a stunning shock. I was there at the Wosk Centre when the announcement was made, and nobody had any forewarning of it, none of us, and when they said it you could have heard a pin drop in the room because we thought they were inviting us to tell us that Metro Vancouver (region) would get the funding or some more localized agency (Aboriginal Informant B).

Not only were urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver surprised by this announcement, it was in opposition to their expectations as they had expected that the federal government was going to announce administration of the dollars through a local mechanism, perhaps MVAEC. There were generally three concerns regarding this

announcement that persisted through the delivery of the UP program: that there was no consultation with the local Aboriginal community prior to this decision being made, that there was no local authority or accountability for the UP program in Metro Vancouver, and that the BCAAFC, especially considering that they are based in Victoria, was not an appropriate organization to be administering the UAS Urban Partnership funds to the Metro Vancouver region.

According to documents that I received through my ATIP request to INAC, the Government of Canada had made claims of consultation with Aboriginal communities and service providers as well as other stakeholders in their transition to a province wide approach to program delivery (INAC, n.d.a; AANDC, 2014). This however is contradicted by the information provided by my informants who indicated that no consultation was held with the Aboriginal community around the transfer of funding to the BCAAFC and the provincial implementation of the UAS. According to one Aboriginal informant who had received UAS funding both before and after the transition to the UP program, this change came without consultation, with the informant further expressing their belief that the government avoids coming to you for your opinion, and that they often post notices of consultation without directly contacting organizations (Aboriginal Informant C). Another Aboriginal informant described how they had heard murmurings of coming changes at the community level, but that the transition was forced upon them without consultation, and they were opposed to the changes (Aboriginal Informant D). This contradiction over whether or not the federal government held consultations with the urban Aboriginal community could perhaps be explained by different understandings of what consultation means. As Informant C expressed above, it is possible that government engages in forms of consultation that the Aboriginal community does not recognize. Even when consultation is held it can be considered to be a form of tokenism where citizens are heard, but with no guarantee that their views will be heeded by government (Arnstein, 1969), and so even if consultation was held, government could have ignored the recommendations of the urban Aboriginal community resulting in tension with Aboriginal service providers over this transition. Consultation will only be recognized as such by the urban Aboriginal community when it incorporates the recommendations of that community; when the community is truly heard. As one urban Aboriginal informant stated, “I don’t think that they (the federal government) are listening.

I think they have to recognize the importance of community consultation, community engagement; the expertise is there and they need to listen to it" (Aboriginal Informant E).

The transfer of UP project funds to the BCAAFC via the NAFC marked a change where the administration of UAS dollars for the Metro Vancouver region was being managed by a non-governmental organization outside of the community. As Stern & Hall (2015) indicated, this is typical of neoliberal approaches to administering grant funding. Placing this responsibility with the BCAAFC, an organization based in Victoria, was a cause for concern among Metro Vancouver-based Aboriginal organizations as they perceived that the BCAAFC did not understand local needs. The general consensus among my Aboriginal informants was that the Friendship Centres do great work, but that they are accountable to the Friendship Centre movement as opposed to being accountable to the local community of Metro Vancouver, and therefore were not the best option for delivering the UP program in the local region. It was also suggested that because the majority of urban Aboriginal people in British Columbia live in the Metro Vancouver region, it made sense for the funds to be managed out of that community. This concern was so great that 10 out of 11 of the Aboriginal informants in my study expressed that not having local accountability for the UP program was a shortcoming of the Strategy. One Aboriginal informant described how the UAS became risky when the money was transferred to the BCAAFC because they are a provincial organization and are not based in Vancouver (Aboriginal Informant C). Another described how this transfer has not allowed the flexibility for the local community to have a say in making decisions (Aboriginal Informant F). Still another described how managing UAS dollars at the local level was previously an important part of making funding decisions because funders knew the applicant organizations and their capacity (Aboriginal Informant E). It was stated by one informant that people from outside of the Vancouver region making funding decisions on projects in Metro Vancouver would be faced with the challenge of not knowing the reputations and capacity of local organizations for delivering projects (Aboriginal Informant D).

Such sentiments regarding the need for local accountability in delivering urban programming were expressed over and over again by multiple Aboriginal informants suggesting that this was a concern of high importance for the community. This could lead to questions however about what the urban Aboriginal community of Metro Vancouver had to gain with local decision making control. Local organizations were well

represented on the previous UAS Steering Committees in Metro Vancouver and perhaps there was concern over favoritism in the decision making process. When presented with this potential concern around favoritism, one Aboriginal respondent indicated that because they are all well run, long-standing organizations, the urban Aboriginal non-profits of Metro Vancouver have policies and ways of preventing that (Aboriginal Informant G). Another Aboriginal informant expanded on this further describing how the previous proposal assessment committees were set up in such a way that they included urban Aboriginal representatives who were not themselves applying for funding, as well as the government funders along with set criteria for scoring proposals and so there were mechanisms in place for making sound funding decisions (Aboriginal Informant D). The federal government themselves did not express any concern over local favoritism with UAS Steering Committees in any of the documents I received through my ATIP request to INAC; their only concern was that they regarded local steering committees as a barrier to forming local and cross-governmental partnerships, providing further evidence that favoritism was not a concern in administering UAS funds through the community level in Metro Vancouver.

One potential motivation for expressing the need for UAS funds to be held at the local level in Metro Vancouver may have been to better support MVAEC. As all of the urban Aboriginal organizations in my sample were MVAEC members, I do feel the need to explore this as a potential bias. Several of my Aboriginal informants indicated that they believed MVAEC was the best option for administering UAS dollars in the Metro Vancouver region. According to one informant MVAEC members talked about this often, that MVAEC should run the UAS and it would be a good source of core funding for them (Aboriginal Informant B). It may be that MVAEC members supported the UAS being administered at the local community level because they would rather see MVAEC receive the funding than the BCAAFC. However, not all of my Aboriginal informants expressed that a local delivery model would need to be administered through MVAEC. Some felt that it could be delivered through some other organization as long as the funding was returned to the community, and so funding for MVAEC was not the only reason for supporting a local delivery model for the UAS.

Additionally, although the support for MVAEC from my Aboriginal informants could be seen as biased, it was a bias that was potentially justified. MVAEC is a unique coalition that has demonstrated success in unifying the majority of urban Aboriginal

organizations in Metro Vancouver. One Aboriginal informant described how they even discussed at MVAEC meetings who should apply for UAS funding, so that organizations were not unnecessarily competing with each other (Aboriginal Informant D). Having non-profit Aboriginal organizations in a single urban region cooperate on that level is quite remarkable considering the competitive nature of grant funding. According to another Aboriginal informant, through MVAEC urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver are trying to formulate a new governance structure so the voices of urban Aboriginal people can be heard (Aboriginal Informant G). This was an important function at a time when the federal and provincial governments could not agree on who had jurisdiction for urban Aboriginal programming. INAC themselves had indicated that a goal for the UAS was for urban Aboriginal community groups to achieve enhanced capacity to be self-reliant (INAC, 2014c), and that urban Aboriginal communities needed to come to the table prepared to lead (AANND, n.d.a). It appears as though MVAEC has developed this capacity for self-reliance and leadership, and so it is understandable how urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver could view MVAEC as being the best fit for administering the UAS to the local community.

Another concern that was raised about the BCAAFC managing UP funds in Metro Vancouver was less about the BCAAFC directly and more about the federal government not being directly involved in the administration of the funds. The BCAAFC was seen to have less decision-making control and authority than the federal government would have, and therefore there was less flexibility with the UP program. This is compatible with MacDonald's (2011) description of neoliberalism where large areas of responsibility are handed off to Aboriginal organizations, such as the NAFC and BCAAFC, without including decision making power. One Aboriginal informant described how processes were lost when the UAS was transferred to the NAFC nationally, how organizations were not previously required to provide a rationale for the importance of culture in programming for example, but now this was required and there were contradictions between what the NAFC and INAC indicated was acceptable (Aboriginal Informant E). Another Aboriginal informant indicated that they believed the federal government had more capacity to make decisions, such as allowing for contract amendments when an organization underspent so that they could be permitted to use those dollars on other needs within their UP projects (Aboriginal Informant C). That same informant believed that the BCAAFC was being micromanaged and not permitted

to make such decisions. So although this criticism was being levelled against the NAFC and BCAAFC, it was really more a criticism of the absence of government involvement in the administration of the UP funds or at least that the government failed to empower the organization responsible for funds administration. With government so distanced from program administration while limiting the decision-making abilities of the program administrator any organization placed in the position of the BCAAFC, including MVAEC, could have faced this same criticism.

There were also some informants who expressed that they believed the BCAAFC lacked the experience and capacity to administer the UAS UP funds. Considering Stern & Hall (2015) and their assertion that neoliberal governments have a tendency to administer funds through a quasi-independent agency in order to absolve themselves of responsibility for program failures, I wonder if by funding the NAFC, and in turn the BCAAFC, to administer the UP program in BC, INAC had essentially set them up for failure. I posed a question to one of my federal government informants on how well INAC had prepared the NAFC and BCAAFC for this role. Although the informant had no direct knowledge of the training that the NAFC and their PTAs received, based on their experience as a government employee they stated the following:

> I think if we were to talk to the NAFC they would be saying, you know what? You guys dumped this on us like that and we did the best we could with what we had at the time. And you're looking at NAFC which is a fairly small organization and their PTAs, so not only did they have to absorb $43 million and figure out how to do that within much stricter guidelines as the program narrowed, they also had to coordinate that across a network that was quite diverse as well, so I don't begrudge them the challenge they faced (Federal Government Informant B).

At the Metro Vancouver community level there was also some understanding of the challenges that the BCAAFC faced in administering the UP program as one Aboriginal informant indicated their belief that when the federal government transferred the UAS to the NAFC, INAC did not provide them with transition support making it difficult for both the NAFC and BCAAFC to manage the program (Aboriginal Informant E). Neoliberal funding mechanisms where governments administer project funds through a quasi-independent third party may appear to absolve those same governments from program failures, but if there were inadequacies in the administration of UP funds by the NAFC and BCAAFC some of the blame appears to lie with the federal government for failing to properly prepare them to administer a multi-million dollar national strategy.

One final shortcoming that I have identified that resulted from the transition away from a community based approach to delivering the UAS was that there appeared to be a disconnect between how the federal government and the local urban Aboriginal community organizations in Metro Vancouver viewed the UAS as a strategy. On the one hand, the federal government had indicated that the UAS was a strategic response for addressing urban Aboriginal issues, and that it was a strategy, not a program (AANDC, n.d.a). On the other hand, many of my Aboriginal informants felt that the UAS and UP program was not a strategy at all. As one of my Aboriginal informants indicated, “I think the UAS dollars were never used for what they were supposed to be used with regards to strategic planning… that never happened, it went straight to project funding and it was just a Band-Aid solution” (Aboriginal Informant E). Whereas the federal government was indicating that the UAS was not a program, the local urban Aboriginal community in Metro Vancouver felt that that is all it was, and it did not do enough to deliver on strategic elements. This disconnect may be because in British Columbia a Provincial Coordination Team (PCT) was created to facilitate UAS strategic planning. In addition to including representatives from INAC, three ministries of the BC Government and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the PCT only included Aboriginal organizations that were provincial in scope, the BCAAFC and the Métis Nation British Columbia (INAC, n.d.b). By eliminating community representation from Metro Vancouver at the planning table, strategic elements of the UAS were not communicated to the organizations responsible for delivering projects themselves and that appears to have been a major oversight in the transition to the UP program.

6.3 Delivering the Urban Partnerships Program

6.3.1 To Increase Urban Aboriginal Participation in the Economy

Once the transition to the most recent cycle of the UAS was completed and the UP program began to be delivered, it became a requirement that projects focused on a singular objective of increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy (INAC, 2014c). This shift away from broader socio-economic objectives such as culture and safety reflected a narrowing of UAS program guidelines characteristic of neoliberal approaches to delivering projects where program content is highly specified by the funder (Scott, 2003). It would have limited the types of projects that could be delivered

under the UP program with a focus on initiatives that placed more responsibility on Aboriginal citizens to care for themselves through employment earnings, reflecting neoliberal goals for responsible citizenship as described by Brodie (2007). According to my informants the impacts that this singular objective of increasing urban Aboriginal economic participation had on project delivery was varied. Some informants indicated that it had positive effects, while others felt that it was a short-sighted approach to dealing with urban Aboriginal issues.

For some organizations, the focus on urban Aboriginal economic participation was a good fit for the work that they were already doing, especially for those organizations whose mandates already included education, skills training or employment. This was true for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, who may have had an advantage in developing UP projects focused on economic participation because it was simply in line with their organizations' objectives. However, because there were already a number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations supporting urban Aboriginal people to achieve improved employment outcomes, some Aboriginal informants felt that the UP program's focus on economic participation was unnecessary and potentially a duplication of services, especially when considering that the federal government already had a designated program to support Aboriginal employment, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). The ASETS is part of a Federal Framework for Indigenous Economic Development with an objective to increase Indigenous participation in the Canadian labour market (GOC, 2017). Across British Columbia, 14 of the organizations who hold ASETS agreements belong to a group called the BCATEAM, and one of my federal government informants described how the BCATEAM was not in support of the UP program's focus on economic development, indicating that their perception was that it was stepping on their toes because economic development is something that they do, and do well (Federal Government Informant B). Although the ASETS program is not specifically designated for urban Aboriginal people, there are three ASETS agreement holders providing services to urban Aboriginal people in the Metro Vancouver region. Increasing economic participation may be a valuable element in programming for urban Aboriginal people, but it is possible that a strict focus on economic development was a duplication of the ASETS program and therefore should not have been the singular objective of the UAS.

For other organizations which did not have an explicit economic focus, they had to tailor the way that they delivered projects to meet the objective for increased urban Aboriginal economic participation. One Aboriginal informant described how they felt that INAC kept “changing the goal post” and by adding economic development to the UP program their organization was being asked to deliver on activities that they normally would not be doing (Aboriginal Informant D). As a result that organization self-selected out; they delivered one UP project in the first year of the final stage of the UAS and never reapplied, choosing to seek out funding elsewhere instead. For their organization it was more important to deliver programming that met theirs and their clients’ needs rather than adapt to meet a funder’s objectives. They may however have been in a relatively unique position in that the project they had developed was well suited to another funding source. Other organizations may have had no choice but to adapt to meet the UP program objectives if they wanted to build on existing projects. This was especially true for organizations which had previously received funding through the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) program that was transferred from Heritage Canada to INAC and absorbed into the UAS. The CCAY program incorporated Aboriginal values, culture, and traditional practices into projects designed to strengthen the cultural identity of urban Aboriginal youth (Marketwired, 2010), and with that program gone there was no longer a funding source for projects that focused specifically on Aboriginal cultural connections.

For those organizations that did adapt their programming to meet economic objectives, some indicated that incorporating employment outcomes into their projects had a positive impact on their program and their clients. One Aboriginal informant described how the economic focus of the UP program was good because they never tied employment into cultural programming before, but they realized they could still incorporate elements such as traditional arts while focusing on skill building and entrepreneurship. The UP program helped them to focus their project so that they could support their participants’ capacity in a different way (Aboriginal Informant H). So although the UP program saw a narrowing of the UAS program objective to increasing urban Aboriginal economic participation, that narrowing of the objective led to innovations in the way their organization approached cultural programming. Another Aboriginal informant described their belief that all people need to be doing something because if you are feeling helpful you are moving forward. By changing their

programming to put more responsibility back onto their participants they have seen people who they thought would never hold down a job now doing fine (Aboriginal Informant I). For this organization, they viewed the responsible citizenship approach that is associated with neoliberalism as effective. They believed program participants just needed some extra support and motivation to secure and maintain employment and ultimately care for their selves.

Many of my Aboriginal informants indicated however that the move away from broader social concerns and the explicit loss of culture in the UP program was deleterious to the welfare of urban Aboriginal people. This is compatible with Stern & Hall (2015) who state that economic development programs can “unintentionally harm the targets of their interventions” (p. 22). In particular it was felt that the focus on economic participation did not give enough consideration to the history of colonization and oppression that Aboriginal people have faced in Canada and the negative cross-generational impacts that that has had on the urban Aboriginal community. Two of my Aboriginal informants discussed the psychology of poverty and how that has become entrenched in Aboriginal people over multiple generations leading to risk taking, poor decision making and defeatism. They believed that by adding a cultural focus back into programming it would empower Aboriginal people, helping them to overcome feelings of shame about their Aboriginal identity, increasing their sense of self-worth and overall wellness (Aboriginal Informants F and G). Another Aboriginal informant indicated their belief that by forcing Aboriginal people to go into employment and education without addressing the healing that needs to be done over past injustices you end up failing that person and they become worse off (Aboriginal Informant D). The most overt criticism of this approach came from Aboriginal Informant C who indicated that economic participation is “bullshit” when you have other life issues that prevent you from participating economically; it takes time and the government will end up supporting Aboriginal people anyway through hospitals or jails without a return to a broader social lens. For these organizations, although they had all received UP funding at some point over the last cycle of the UAS, there was concern that the narrow economic focus of the Strategy was limiting the ability of Aboriginal organizations to help urban Indigenous people at their level, with some even indicating that this approach could do more damage than good. One of these informants (Aboriginal Informant G) also expressed however how this narrow objective could be sidestepped.

Some of my informants described the shift towards a single objective of economic participation, which is characteristic of neoliberal project funding that tightly controls program content, as simply a matter of wording that needed to be worked around. One Aboriginal informant indicated that if nothing else, the change added to their overall sense of being careful stating further that, “when the Conservatives got in we had to use a different language… we had a devil of a time trying to come up with new terminology that suited what they wanted” (Aboriginal Informant J). In spite of their need to adapt the language however, this organization never felt that they had to worry too much about whether or not they were going to get funding. Another Aboriginal informant also attributed this change to the Harper Conservatives indicating that the move away from culture was a loss, but they were able to make it work because everything they do can be seen to help Aboriginal participants become more involved in the economy (Aboriginal Informant G). This notion was also supported by one non-Aboriginal informant who indicated that when the program changed to Urban Partnerships they had to downplay certain aspects of their project and speak the language that fit more with the mandate (Non-Aboriginal Informant A). This informant too indicated their belief that this change resulted from the Conservative government moving away from programming that was social development focused, but by changing the way they worded their proposal they were able to successfully secure funding. Proposal writing and wordsmithing are skills and it appears that organizations with greater capacity for proposal writing and word manipulation are more able to deliver projects that remain unaffected or unchanged in the face of narrowing program objectives such as which happened in the final stage of the UAS under the Harper Conservative Government.

In spite of the federal government’s goal for utilizing the UAS to build cross-governmental partnerships with provincial governments, it is interesting to note also that in British Columbia having a singular objective of urban Aboriginal economic participation for the UAS may have been a barrier to forming those partnerships. According to one federal government informant, the BC Government’s ORAAP was broader than economic participation, so although INAC could come to the table and talk about economic participation there were a lot of other issues that they could not get involved in, which contributed to a lack of alignment with the ORAAP (Federal Government Informant B). Considering that the federal government had neoliberal goals for leveraging funds from the provinces, this may have limited the amount of funding that

the Government of BC could contribute to a combined ORAAP/UAS because INAC was only able to engage in discussions around economic participation. Limiting the objective of the UP program in this way may have ultimately had an impact on the amount of funding that became available to the organizations that deliver the programming.

6.3.2 Partnerships, Leveraged Funds and Project Sustainability

If the objective of the UP program was to increase urban Aboriginal participation in the economy, its goal was to build partnerships to leverage funds in order to accomplish that objective and sustain the momentum of the initial UP investment, which was not intended to provide ongoing support (BCAAFC, n.d.; INAC, 2014c). This would have accomplished neoliberal goals of limiting government responsibility while offloading that responsibility to others as a form of responsible citizenship. UP program documents indicated that partnerships were now a required element of project delivery as applicants were required to demonstrate one or more partnership commitment, but there was no indication given as to who the partners should be. With INAC focusing their efforts internally on negotiating partnerships with provincial governments to better align their approaches to addressing urban Aboriginal issues, it is interesting that no direction was given to proponent organizations that they should do the same. On one hand this seems like a flaw in the strategic planning of the UP program because if INAC was concerned with aligning the UAS with provincial programming that would have been valuable direction to give to proponent organizations so that they could better plan their projects to meet INAC's goals. On the other hand if the UP program was designed to meet neoliberal objectives of offloading responsibility of the federal government and leverage funds from elsewhere, INAC likely did not want to place limitations on where that additional funding could come from. Nonetheless, by removing local communities from the UAS' regional planning group, and not providing any direction to UP project applicants on the goal for provincial collaboration, proponents likely did not know of the desire for provincial partnerships and this could have limited the number of provincial partnerships negotiated by local organizations.

The UP program by design necessitated that proponent organizations leverage funds from elsewhere to deliver projects. The maximum amount of funding available for projects in the Metro Vancouver region was $85,000. Providing such a limited budget is characteristic of neoliberal approaches to project delivery where governments minimize

their own responsibility and funding contributions while offloading responsibility onto others (Ready, 2012; Scott, 2003; Stern & Hall, 2015). Many of my informants, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, indicated that it was not possible to deliver a project within this budget, so limiting project funding ensured that proponents would need to seek out partners to leverage program investments from elsewhere. One Aboriginal informant described the need to form partnerships in order to meet all of a project's operational costs in the following way:

> (UP funding) doesn't cover everything, you really do need to branch out and find those partnerships to be able to cover things that you need like materials and supplies. This (UP budget) is really just a lot of rent and one staff and the base cost really, and then we brought in so many different community partners that came in and helped us out (to) continue that level of programming (Aboriginal Informant H).

Another Aboriginal informant described how the UP funding is just a small piece of their project's budget and they could not rely on UP funding alone to deliver their project, which they indicated required a minimum of $300,000 to deliver (Aboriginal Informant C). This sentiment was also echoed by one non-Aboriginal informant who indicated that there was no way that they could have run their UP project without additional money, and no one could have done what they did in terms of project delivery with just the UP funding alone (Non-Aboriginal Informant B). Although the UP program may have provided a base for organizations to develop their projects, the limited budget made it difficult to deliver all of the activities within a program, which necessitated the need to seek out partners from elsewhere.

The types of partners that were secured for project delivery varied and included organizations such as other non-profits, First Nations, health authorities and educational institutions, foundations, municipal and provincial governments, and private industry. These partnerships could be classified into two types: those that leveraged in-kind contributions and those that leveraged cash contributions. The UP application form allowed for applicants to list both in-kind and cash contributions from partners, but as leveraging additional investments was a goal for the UP program it appears that partners who provided cash contributions to projects were valued more by the funders of the program.

In reviewing UP funding proposals that were provided to me by informants, I noted that three projects that were funded in the first year of the UP program relied heavily on in-kind partnerships with little to no leveraged cash contributions. Although these projects received funding for one year, none of these organizations received future funding through the UP program whereas organizations that were able to demonstrate cash contributions from partners did receive funding in the following fiscal years. This is interesting considering that the Contributions to Support the Urban Aboriginal Strategy state that, “The Urban Partnerships program is not intended to provide ongoing operational support” (INAC, 2014c). There could be a fundamental difference between what Aboriginal organizations value in partnerships and what INAC and in turn the BCAAFC expected from partnerships, and that could have presented a barrier to some urban Aboriginal organizations receiving or maintaining funding under this last cycle of the UAS.

Many of my Aboriginal informants described the value of working together with other community oriented organizations, mainly other non-profits, in order to leverage in-kind contributions. This type of partnership appears to be of high importance for urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver who because of their own limited budgets rely upon one another for shared resources. For example, one Aboriginal informant described how the Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver are already partnering and when you tap into the community, organizations have the ability to help one another to better support their Aboriginal clients (Aboriginal Informant D). Urban Aboriginal organizations described the importance of sharing services with one another for the benefit of their clients with examples including sharing seats in a training program, offering addictions support, referrals for housing, and help within the criminal justice system. These types of partnerships are invaluable to urban Aboriginal community organizations in Metro Vancouver, but they are often hard to quantify, and as a result likely hold less value with funders. As well, these types of in-kind supports, because they have no cash value, do not offer any potential for sustaining projects beyond the one year of funding that was meant to be available to UP projects. Ironically then, this limited potential may diminish their value to funders that are concerned with leveraging partnerships to sustain projects.

Partnerships that leverage cash funding appear to be preferred by funders as neoliberal approaches to delivering projects assume that leveraged cash contributions

will help to make up for funding shortfalls that result from a limited amount of base funding. However, partnerships that provide investments in cash are difficult to secure, and often times the funding that is leveraged is small, even in comparison to the amount of UP funding received. In reviewing UP proposal applications and partner funding amounts that were provided to me, I was able to determine that cash contributions for urban Aboriginal organizations' UP projects ranged from $500 to $85,000, and averaged $18,417. However, by removing the low and high values which appeared to be outliers, cash contributions for urban Aboriginal projects ranged from $2,500 to $30,000 with an average of $13,550. Many of my informants described how they had to cobble together small amounts of partner funding in order to make their projects work. As described by one of my Aboriginal informants, these are small dollar amounts and usually one-time deals (Aboriginal Informant C). Not only are these funding amounts small, they are also usually one time contributions, and although they have some value in making up for funding shortfalls from the UP program, they have no potential for sustaining projects long-term. As securing additional cash contributions can be a difficult process, constantly seeking out additional partners can also put a strain on organizational capacity. Aboriginal Informant C also described how "this has strangled organizations" because every funding partner has its limits, and constantly having to find new partners is burning out staff, impacting their workers' health negatively. The constant cycle of seeking out partners to apply for funding that results from neoliberal approaches to contract funding can lead to employee exhaustion.

Although many of the informants in my study described success in cobbling together multiple sources of funding in order to make a project work, it may be that the UP funding received did not always leverage these additional dollars. Often times these other sources of funding existed prior to an organization receiving UP funding, or were applied for separately in response to a completely different proposal call from a different funder. It was not uncommon for proponents to rely upon services that already existed within their own organizations, funded through a different source, to supplement the activities of UP projects. One Aboriginal informant described for example how they received small amounts of funding for other services such as elder supports or meals, and that they tied this funding into their UP project as much of their funding was inter-related, but the implication is that this funding already existed; it was not leveraged by the UP funding that they received (Aboriginal Informant G). Another Aboriginal informant

stated outright that their project began with funding from a different partner, implying that it was more like the UP funding was leveraged from that initial source (Aboriginal Informant C).

The design of the UP proposal application required that proponents list their partners and the value of their contributions at the time of application. However, if proponents were already able to demonstrate funding from elsewhere to contribute to the project prior to receiving any financial commitment through the UP program, is it fair to say that the UP program leveraged those funds? In many cases, the answer appeared to be no. This also appeared to be the case for both of my non-Aboriginal informants who described their UP projects as being add-ons to services that they were already offering, and they included those original funders as partners in their UP project applications (Non-Aboriginal Informants A and B). The Contributions to Support the Urban Aboriginal Strategy stated that the UP program was not intended to supplement a shortage of funding under another program or support an already successful program (INAC, 2014c), but it may be that organizations who had the wherewithal to include existing funders as partners held an advantage in having their UP projects approved.

One of the goals for leveraging partnerships in the UP program was to sustain the momentum of the initial investment provided through INAC and the BCAAFC as the UP program was not intended to provide ongoing support, especially as a repetitive delivery offering (INAC, 2014c). It does not however appear realistic that most non-profit organizations could sustain a project after a small one-time funding contribution from INAC, especially considering that most of the funding contributed by partners was even less in cash value and also term-limited. One of my federal government informants appeared to agree stating, “there was some thought that okay, you would fund programs and services and then they would in turn kind of leverage funding and build some sustainability; that's a faulty assumption at the best of times” (Federal Government Informant B).

The main approach that organizations took for sustaining their projects was to re-apply for UP funding every year. Over the life of the UP program, there were 14 Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver who received UP funding at some point, and of those, nine received UP funding across multiple years even though UP funding was not intended for repetitive delivery offerings. See Table 6 for Aboriginal

organizations who received UP funding in Metro Vancouver by fiscal year. It could be that organizations delivered completely different projects in each year that they received funding, and that was in fact the case for one of my non-Aboriginal informants who delivered two very distinct projects in two different years (Non-Aboriginal Informant B). However most informants described delivering projects that were essentially the same, but with modifications so that they could qualify for additional UP funding. One Aboriginal informant described the evolution of their UP project in the following way:

> The program continues to evolve with new and expanded partnerships, and the development of activities that respond to current youth interests, as well as partnership opportunities. While some activities may be reoccurring, new youth and partners participate, there's an expansion or deepening of the skills development opportunities… We keep providing different opportunities and even bigger opportunities (Aboriginal Informant H).

This informant expressed their belief that by making yearly changes to their UP project, there was no concern from the BCAAFC in re-funding them. It may be that organizations that have greater capacity for proposal writing, and have an enhanced ability to craft their wording in response to proposal calls were more likely to be re-funded through the UP program. This notion was confirmed by one of my federal government informants who indicated that there was a nuance there that you could not be funded for the exact same project, but some organizations had the capacity to, for example, split their projects into phases where phase two was built a little differently than phase one (Federal Government Informant B) . This informant further stated that organizations that had that understanding of the program were going to be favored when it came to funding, and there are some challenges with that approach. The challenge being that there may have been some organizations that were well positioned to deliver programming, but because they lacked proposal writing skills or understanding of the program requirements, did not receive UP funding or had their UP funding limited to only one year.

Table 6 Aboriginal Organizations In Metro Vancouver That Received UP Funding By Fiscal Year

Organization	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society/Urban Spirit Foundation	Yes		
Aboriginal Front Door Society	Yes		
Aboriginal Mother Centre Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
Circle of Eagles Lodge Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes
Helping Spirit Lodge Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association	Yes	Yes	
Lu'ma Native Housing Society	Yes	Yes	Yes
MVAEC			Yes
Native Education College	Yes	Yes	Yes
Urban Native Youth Association	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society	Yes		
Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society	Yes		
Vancouver Native Health Society	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: http://nafc.ca/en/our-story/urban-partnerships/ combined with informant interviews

Of the organizations that I interviewed who only received UP funding in the first year of this last phase of the UAS, three out of four had some success in sustaining the ongoing momentum of their projects. One organization was able to sustain their project because they used the UP funding that they received to create a product, an educational video that they can continue to use in perpetuity (Aboriginal Informant A). It may be that projects that result in a product or a demonstration of some kind, as in best practices, are more likely to be sustained without ongoing funding than projects that provide a continued service. This notion was supported by one federal government informant who indicated that the examples they could think of where a non-profit sustained a project were instances of pilot projects where organizations realigned the ways they were doing things to sustain a new approach as opposed to creating a free-standing project that requires funding on an annual basis (Federal Government Informant B). Creating products and establishing best practices do bring value to urban Aboriginal organizations and their communities, but there remains a need to provide ongoing in-person services. In particular, I question the value in creating best practices for program delivery if there is no ongoing funding to deliver programs that would adopt those best practices. One non-Aboriginal informant shared a similar sentiment stating that, “one of the constant issues that non-profit organizations are faced with is that funders are always looking to fund new projects leaving those projects/programs that have proven success struggling

for funding or having to close and make room for new projects" (Non-Aboriginal Informant B). Because of funders' constant pursuit for the next new approach to program delivery, programs that provide an already successful community service can be devalued and therefore difficult to sustain. This is a characteristic of neoliberal project funding as demonstrated by Stern & Hall (2015) who indicate that funding is often provided for proof-of-concept or projects that are deemed to be innovative.

The other organizations that had success in sustaining their projects after one year of funding in this last cycle of the UAS did so mainly because they pursued alternate funding from elsewhere (Aboriginal Informants D and E). This alternate funding was not built into their UP projects' plans for sustainability, rather it was pursued after the decision was made that they were either not re-approved or would not re-apply. In one case it meant altering their project to meet the objectives of a new funder (Aboriginal Informant D). There is a need for non-profit organizations to reinvent themselves and their projects depending on where they receive their funding from, and it appears that this can have an impact on program continuity which ultimately impacts organizations' relationships with their clients who come to expect particular services.

Due to the timeframe of my study I was not able to determine if urban Aboriginal organizations that were funded in the last year of the UP program had success in sustaining their projects, but when asked about their plans for sustainability most informants described taking a similar approach in pursuing alternate funding. All of the urban Aboriginal organizations that I interviewed who received UP funding in the final year of the program indicated a need to find another source of funding for their projects if UAS funding were to come to an end. Some described how they might be able to carry the program for a short time by reallocating funds from elsewhere, using own source revenue, or even having staff volunteer their time, but that they would eventually need to secure a new source of funding (Aboriginal Informants G, H, and J). Without continued support from the UAS or alternate funding from another source, all of my urban Aboriginal informants expressed that their projects would eventually have to shut down. This was also a concern for one non-Aboriginal informant who described their situation as "getting dicey" (Non-Aboriginal Informant A); for the other non-Aboriginal informant they were not as concerned as they had planned to let their project sunset due lack of demand (Non-Aboriginal Informant B).

It appears then that building partnerships has had little to no success in contributing to the sustainability of projects funded through the UP program. Organizations may have been able to continue their projects by seeking out other funders, but I would argue that that is not partnership; rather that would be the federal government offloading responsibility onto others for urban Aboriginal programming. There are benefits to partnerships such as organizations sharing resources and many informants expressed that working with partners was one of the positive aspects of the UP program, but by placing an unrealistic amount of significance on the value of partnerships, there is a risk that the concept of partnerships becomes meaningless rhetoric. One Aboriginal informant for example described partnerships as being just a buzz word, indicating that the expectation of partnerships under the UP program was not really something that could benefit the urban Aboriginal community (Aboriginal Informant G). Partnerships are not some panacea that can transform one year of seed funding into a long-term, sustainable project or initiative.

6.3.3 One-Year Term Limited Funding

That project funding through the UP program was limited to one year was also an area of concern for many of the informants in my study. The majority of service delivery organizations that I interviewed, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, agreed that the term-limited, one year nature of the funding that was available for UP projects was a flaw in the program design that negatively impacted organizations, and created barriers to success and long-term sustainability. This was even true for those organizations that received UP funding over multiple years as there is uncertainty with year to year funding, and the transition from contract to contract often did not go smoothly.

One concern was that one year of funding, especially for new projects, was not enough time to roll out a project, become operational and deliver services. One Aboriginal informant indicated for example that one year funding leads to failure because once a program is up and running it is almost time to close it; it takes time to establish a program, bring the pieces together and hire and train staff, and that alone can take up to 6 months (Aboriginal Informant K). It may be difficult to design and deliver a program in the short turnaround time that often accompanies a call for proposals, but perhaps this approach would be well suited to organizations that plan ahead in anticipation of funding opportunities. Another Aboriginal informant indicated that they believed that this

approach might work for organizations that are a little more sophisticated, who have had an idea for a long time and are just waiting for seed funding (Aboriginal Informant B). They also believed however that most organizations, especially smaller ones, would not have the capacity to plan that far in advance and that this approach is ultimately a flawed process. Considering that neoliberal approaches to project funding also narrowly prescribe the goals, objectives and types of activities allowed within a program, it would likely be difficult to align a previously planned project to any call for proposals without having to make significant changes to its design. Pre-planning projects in anticipation of finding a funding source would require a significant amount of foresight, and perhaps luck.

Another major concern that was emphasized by the majority of informants who had received UP funding was that year to year funding often resulted in administrative delays. The funding had to go out for proposal every year; sometimes the call for proposals was late into the fiscal year, and sometimes even when the proposal call was not late, funding approvals were, so projects were not able to start at the beginning of the fiscal year on time. This exacerbated the difficulties of trying to set-up, coordinate and deliver services within a one-year contract because often by the time the funding rolled out, the time left to deliver a project was significantly less than one year. The first year of the UP program was noted to be particularly bad by many informants, with one informant indicating that in a fiscal year that runs from April through to the end of March, the call for proposals came out in December with a proposal deadline less than two weeks later, and approvals granted with funding released in January (Aboriginal Informant H). That left only three months to set up and deliver a project, but also meant that the money granted needed to be spent within a three month period. This exceptionally long delay was likely a result of the transition from the old UAS to the new “improved” UAS, but for a program that was boasting about improvements and greater efficiencies the first year of project delivery appeared to get off to a rocky start.

These funding delays happened in other years as well. One Aboriginal informant estimated that by the time funding rolled out, one-year projects often became nine-month projects, which hindered program efficacy (Aboriginal Informant F). The condensed funding period that resulted was perceived by many informants to have a negative impact on project budgets. This was especially true for organizations that were receiving ongoing funding on a year to year basis. In order to maintain consistency in

programming and minimize any negative impacts on their program participants and staff, many informants described reallocating funds from other sources to carry a project until UP funding was approved. According to Aboriginal Informant F though, this was not possible for all organizations; smaller non-profits with less capacity may not have been able to cash manage projects, and therefore were at a disadvantage in maintaining program consistency when faced with funding delays.

It is also important to note that organizations that had the ability to self-fund projects during funding delays were not eligible to have those expenses reimbursed even though project budgets were normally still based on the full fiscal year[4]. That made it difficult for non-profit organizations who were often already struggling with funding limitations to balance their budgets at the end of the year. Though this was a common concern for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations alike, one non-Aboriginal informant articulated it best indicating that they were told retroactively when funding was finally approved that all expenses from April to June of that fiscal year could not be counted, and as a result they had $20,000 in expenses that would not be reimbursed (Non-Aboriginal Informant A). This was in spite of the fact that their approved budget amount was based on their proposal which included those expenses from April to June. As a result of ineligible expenses from periods where funding was delayed, service providers found themselves having to expend dollars in areas that were less essential to their needs. Aboriginal Informant H for example described being rushed and scrambling to spend money in a shorter time frame, which was not fair when the program is based on a year. Non-Aboriginal Informant A described having to spend money on computer equipment in order to expend their budget, when what they really needed the money for was to pay wages. Although proponents assume some risk in running a project before a funding approval is granted because there is no guarantee that their project will be approved, they have no culpability for funding delays themselves. If there are delays in funding, perhaps funders should take responsibility for those delays and allow for the reimbursement of expenditures in the best interest of nurturing successful programming. Or better yet, perhaps funders should ensure that delays in funding do not happen,

[4] In fiscal year 2014/2015, the first year of the UP program, project budgets were reduced from a maximum of $85,000 to a maximum of $60,000 due to the extreme funding delay.

which I am sure would be a welcome relief to project service providers. Forcing organizations to spend dollars in areas outside of their needs seems frivolous at best.

One-year, term limited funding also had a negative impact on staff capacity, and this was another major concern that was expressed by many of my informants. The nature of one-year projects meant that organizations were likely to only be able to offer employment contracts one year at a time, which would not provide much guarantee of stability for potential employees. This is consistent with literature which shows that neoliberal approaches to project funding lead to precarious employment (Johnstone, Lee, & Connelly, 2017). One Aboriginal informant described contract employment as a risky prospect for both employees and employers stating that employees who fear their job will end on March 31 might jump ship in January for a job that has more security, and constantly onboarding people is not the best use of an organization's time or money (Aboriginal Informant F). They also indicated their belief that the risk of employee turnover was compounded in Metro Vancouver due to the high cost of living in the region. With high monthly expenses, employees who lack security in their job may be more likely to seek out longer term employment elsewhere. Contract instability and high employee turnover could also mean that employers are faced with not being able to hire the most qualified candidate for the job, which could have negative consequences for project delivery and accomplishing UP program goals and objectives.

In spite of the potential for high turnover with one-year term limited funding, many informants described having loyal staff that do their best to weather the storm. Those organizations that had an expectation of yearly funding in particular however felt that the yearly cycle of employment uncertainty was unfair to employees, and had a negative effect on worker morale. One Aboriginal informant for example described how they have had to lay off staff for short periods in between funding, and although staff will often hang in there in anticipation of being rehired, it does impact them negatively and also negatively impacts the morale of their co-workers who see this happening and wonder if it could also happen to them (Aboriginal Informant J). Another Aboriginal informant who opted not to reapply for UP funding after delivering a project in the first year indicated that this was one of their considerations in not re-applying, stating that "because you have to hire, fire, hire, fire, I would never do that with our staff" (Aboriginal Informant D). Year to year contract funding then can also be seen to negatively impact employee wellness and contribute to employee burnout.

Considering that by design the UP program was a neoliberal attempt to mandate organizations to build partnerships and leverage funds, it is interesting to note that another major concern of one-year term limited funding that was expressed by many informants was that its short duration coupled with funding uncertainty presented a barrier to building partnerships. The UP program seemed to assume that partnerships would contribute to project sustainability, but as results from the previous section of this chapter have shown, that was not the case. Partners were willing to make contributions to projects, but there was an expectation from partners that projects were already sustainable and a lack of built in sustainability beyond one year made negotiating partnerships challenging. One Aboriginal informant indicated for example that with year to year funding it is difficult to guarantee to partners that your project will be around in the long-term and some potential partners were unwilling to engage without that guarantee (Aboriginal Informant F). Another Aboriginal informant described how the funding delays that can accompany year to year funding are also a barrier to partnership as it is difficult to plan out activities with your partners when funding timelines are uncertain; if that partner needs to stick to a schedule, such as an employer who is looking to hire program participants to coincide with a scheduled project, straying from that schedule could cause that partner to look for other options (Aboriginal Informant A). One non-Aboriginal informant also agreed that the one-year timeline of the UP program was too short for building partnerships, which they described as a lengthy process (Non-Aboriginal Informant B). For neoliberal programs that have a goal of building partnerships, it appears that one year of funding is not enough and funders may want to consider longer-term options if partnerships and leveraged funding is a goal, as was the case with the UP program.

One final concern that I would like to mention about the one-year term limited nature of UP funding that was expressed to me is that one year of funding is simply not enough time for programming in support of a population faced with multiple barriers. Urban Aboriginal program participants were described by one Aboriginal informant, for example, as generally being stigmatized, living in poverty, lacking in education, and needing support from the government (Aboriginal Informant K). INAC had stated in the transition to the last cycle of the UAS that the Strategy was not designed to deliver on socio-economic outcomes and that its only purpose was to leverage change (AANDC, n.d.a). That is the wrong approach however to programming for urban Aboriginal people

in Canada. It is clear that projects designed to build partnerships with one year of funding is not leveraging change. It is creating instability for non-profit organizations that provide much needed services to a population in need of programming that will deliver on socio-economic outcomes. Delivering on socio-economic outcomes must be an objective for programming in support of urban Aboriginal people in Canada.

6.3.4 Competition and Community Conflict

Neoliberal approaches to project funding are designed to be competitive (Scott, 2003; Stern & Hall, 2015). In order to be awarded funding, proponents must prove their efficiency in a process where there are clear winners and losers. Government funding is not guaranteed as an entitlement, and that is understandable as it is in the best interest of the urban Aboriginal community that services through the UP program be provided by organizations that are able to demonstrate competence and past success in delivering and managing programs in an accountable way. However the competitive process is not without its flaws, as results from previous sections of this chapter have shown, it may not be the organizations most capable of delivering services that are awarded contracts, but organizations which have the greatest capacity for proposal writing that win. This notion is supported by Scott (2003) who indicates that larger organizations with larger budgets have greater capacity to compete for project dollars. It is also questionable how far the competitive process should reach; in the case of the UP program, a program for urban Aboriginal people, the proposal call was open to just about anybody including incorporated not-for-profit organizations, Aboriginal representative organizations, municipal governments, education authorities and institutions, health authorities and institutions, and for-profit enterprises (INAC, 2014c). The transition to the UP program also saw a shift away from funding that was earmarked specifically for the Metro Vancouver region to funding being opened up across the province of BC. These competitive processes can lead to conflict within and across communities and urban Aboriginal organizations expressed concern about conflict and potential conflict and division amongst themselves, as well as with non-Aboriginal organizations, and on-reserve First Nations resulting from competition for UP funding.

As was indicated previously, all of the urban Aboriginal organizations in my sample frame were members of MVAEC. MVAEC appears to be doing a good job of bringing the urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver together in a cooperative

way. However, even with an admirable level of cooperation among MVAEC members, there was some indication of competition leading to conflict between urban Aboriginal organizations themselves. One Aboriginal informant, for example, described how the competition for UAS dollars became greater when the UP program was rolled out province wide, which meant fewer dollars for the Metro Vancouver region (Aboriginal Informant C). This informant further indicated that with fewer dollars in Metro Vancouver this has led to conflict in the community, and their organization had to be aggressive in finding new options for program delivery. With less funding available at the Metro Vancouver community level, it appears there may be some organizations that were faced with prioritizing self-preservation over community cohesion. Another Aboriginal informant agreed, stating that cooperation is a hard sell when you want to keep all of your employees or perhaps even add more (Aboriginal Informant J). In order to minimize competition among urban Aboriginal organizations, this informant indicated their belief that the urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver should decide as a community who should apply for funding, and offer support to those organizations if help is needed to secure that funding.

As another informant (Aboriginal Informant D) had expressed that MVAEC members were working together to decide who should apply for funding, I asked Aboriginal informant J if they agreed that this was happening, but they implied that that was not the case. As evidence, Aboriginal informant J mentioned how MVAEC themselves pursued funding that ought to have gone to one of their member agencies instead. That MVAEC, an organization that was created by the community to build partnerships and coordinate efforts among its members, pursued UP project funding for their selves was regarded by this informant as problematic. MVAEC however appeared to agree with this sentiment. In a submission to INAC with recommendations for UAS renewal, MVAEC wrote:

> Groups that serve in some form of coordination or umbrella role, such as MVAEC must compete against its members for project dollars… A more optimal approach would be to establish a funding envelope that would allow for core funding so that groups like MVAEC could better support the Indigenous non-profit sector versus competing with them for project dollars.

It appears as though a strict reliance on project dollars, that is characteristic of neoliberal approaches to project funding, was contributing to organizations within MVAEC

competing with one another. Because project funding had largely taken the place of core funding, many organizations needed to pursue project dollars to sustain their operations. Of the urban Aboriginal organizations that I interviewed 6 out of 11, so more than half, did not receive core funding. Neoliberal approaches to project funding and a lack of core funding among MVAEC members appear to have led to at least some community conflict within the urban Aboriginal community in Metro Vancouver.

Another area of concern highlighted by the majority of the urban Aboriginal informants in my study was that UP funding was open to non-Aboriginal organizations, and it was believed that the competition that this created with non-Aboriginal groups was detrimental to organizations in the urban Aboriginal non-profit community. There was a recognition that non-Aboriginal organizations serve Aboriginal clients, but urban Aboriginal organizations expressed three main concerns about competing with non-Aboriginal groups: that non-Aboriginal organizations can fund their projects through other sources, that non-Aboriginal organizations have more capacity than Aboriginal organizations and therefore might hold an unfair advantage in competing for projects, and that non-Aboriginal organizations do not have the expertise in providing services through an Aboriginal lens.

For urban Aboriginal organizations, because their mandates are Aboriginal specific, funding opportunities are limited, and the UAS was described as being the only funding source available for urban Aboriginal, off-reserve specific programming. On the other hand, urban Aboriginal organizations held a perception that non-Aboriginal organizations could get funding for projects from other sources and therefore should not impede on the capacity of urban Aboriginal organizations. One Aboriginal informant, for example, described a certain non-Aboriginal organization as being large and well respected and therefore a good fit for many other funders, which they felt was not necessarily the case for urban Aboriginal community organizations (Aboriginal Informant G). By simply allowing non-Aboriginal organizations to compete for UP funding it could be that fewer urban Aboriginal organizations, that have limited funding options, were able to benefit from what was already a limited pot of money, potentially reducing the capacity of urban Aboriginal community organizations.

Similarly it was also believed by many informants that in general non-Aboriginal organizations have greater capacity for proposal writing making them difficult to compete

against, and that could further serve to reduce the amount of funding available to urban Aboriginal organizations. There was recognition from urban Aboriginal informants that they still needed to demonstrate capacity to deliver programming, but many believed they were at a disadvantage in competing against larger non-Aboriginal groups. When discussing non-Aboriginal organizations' participation in the UP program one Aboriginal informant stated for example:

> I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't be competitive, I think we need to be… because there's some organizations that are obviously better off than others and can afford to spend a little more on the side than others can, I think we have to really be careful (Aboriginal Informant J).

Urban Aboriginal organizations did not expect UP funding as an entitlement, and understood the need to be competitive in order to deliver quality programming to the community, but competing against non-Aboriginal organizations for a program that was supposed to be building capacity in the urban Aboriginal community was perceived as unjust and a threat to their own sustainability. For example, one Aboriginal informant indicated that there are no super agencies in the Aboriginal community, and by competing with super agencies they lose capacity to organizations that already have capacity (Aboriginal Informant C).

Not all non-Aboriginal organizations are super agencies, however. As was indicated previously in this chapter, one of my non-Aboriginal informants had the smallest annual operating budget of any of the organizations that I interviewed, and they described themselves as struggling from contract to contract (Non-Aboriginal Informant A). Being a non-Aboriginal organization is not in and of itself an indicator of greater capacity to compete for project dollars, and organizations such as this may not hold any competitive advantage over urban Aboriginal organizations. It should also be noted that this informant believed that they could bring value to the Aboriginal community because, for example, they are not limited by constraints the way Aboriginal organizations are and they have freedom to be innovative and collaborative. Perhaps being able to apply for funding beyond the scope of targeted Aboriginal funds is a valuable asset for non-Aboriginal organizations that allows them to provide program enhancements that can benefit the urban Aboriginal community. Non-Aboriginal Informant B also indicated that one of their strengths was their depth of programming. This informant was the largest organization that I interviewed and could in fact be considered a super agency, but

because of their size they described how participants of their UP program could receive additional support through exposure to their other 45 programs and services.

Being that non-Aboriginal organizations may be able to add value to Aboriginal programming, is there a way then that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations can collaborate to deliver services? Some Aboriginal informants seemed to think so. One Aboriginal informant indicated for example that because non-Aboriginal organizations have resources and expertise they have a role to play, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations can learn from one another (Aboriginal Informant K). They did however also specify that in working with partners on urban Aboriginal issues, Aboriginal organizations must be given the leadership role. Another Aboriginal informant expanded on this stating that although they have concerns around non-Aboriginal organizations receiving funding, it does not mean that they are not willing to work with them, but non-Aboriginal service providers should come to the urban Aboriginal community with partnership as opposed to working on their own (Aboriginal Informant D). This reflected a belief that Aboriginal organizations have the expertise in providing culturally appropriate services through an Aboriginal lens that non-Aboriginal organizations do not have. This concern could perhaps be overcome however if non-Aboriginal groups can demonstrate that they are partnering with the urban Aboriginal community, contributing value through their capacity while learning through Aboriginal leadership. There does appear to be room for non-Aboriginal organizations to be a part of programming for urban Aboriginal people so long as they are working in partnerships with the urban Aboriginal community, and I would like to note that both of my non-Aboriginal informants did have partnerships with Aboriginal organizations as part of their projects. If non-Aboriginal organizations are applying for urban Aboriginal program dollars themselves however, they may want to consider if they truly need those dollars, and if by doing so they are infringing on the capacity of the urban Aboriginal community. I think most non-Aboriginal not-for-profit organizations are well intentioned with goals for Aboriginal programming that are born out of a desire to help rather than compete with urban Aboriginal organizations. One non-Aboriginal informant stated for example that it did not occur to them that they may be getting funding over Indigenous organizations because their proposals are better, and agreed that that was problematic (Non-Aboriginal Informant B). Also born out of their goodwill for Canada's Aboriginal peoples, this organization has plans for a Truth and Reconciliation framework, which is a noble

undertaking. They, and organizations like them who have a goal for reconciliation, would do well to gather input from the urban Aboriginal community that they may be competing against before planning for urban Aboriginal projects as part of their reconciliation process.

Neoliberal approaches to delivering the UP program and the competitive processes that it entails also have the potential to create conflict or division between urban Aboriginal and on-reserve First Nations communities. One of the special considerations that urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver must acknowledge is that they are in Coast Salish territory and they must respect that as a protocol. This can create uneasiness for urban Aboriginal organizations because on one hand they do not want to show any disrespect for local First Nations, but on the other hand they have to ensure their own success. One Aboriginal informant described this as a dilemma because as an urban Aboriginal organization they are never sure if they are stepping on the toes of the local First Nations (Aboriginal Informant K). As a solution this informant suggested that it is important to involve representatives from the local Bands in urban Aboriginal community events in order to build relationships with them.

Relationships with local First Nations may also be important in nurturing local business development. Another Aboriginal informant indicated that oftentimes potential project partners want that connection to the local First Nations leadership, and so urban Aboriginal organizations need to leverage those connections (Aboriginal Informant G). First Nations support is seen to validate the work of corporations more so than support from the urban Aboriginal community, and corporations and other partners may also value the photo ops and media attention that meeting with First Nations chiefs can generate. As Scott (2003) points out, corporate marketing departments are often in charge of “philanthropic” giving and they carefully seek out partnerships that offer return on investment through a heightened community profile. Working with First Nations provides a return on investment for business partners because of the good public relations as well as access to resources and land that urban Aboriginal organizations cannot provide, making it difficult for urban Aboriginal organizations to compete with. For example, Aboriginal Informant G also described how they had created a corporate sponsorship program and hired a company who had success negotiating corporate sponsorship for First Nations communities, but when they tried to engage corporations on behalf of an urban organization it failed. Urban Aboriginal organizations are at a

disadvantage in competing for partnerships with First Nations because they do not offer the same return on investment that First Nations do; without land and resources there is little that they have to leverage for partnerships and so neoliberal approaches to Aboriginal economic development that favor the commodification of land and natural resources do not favor off-reserve urban Aboriginal communities.

Many Aboriginal informants also described how the general competition between urban Aboriginal and on-reserve First Nations communities for scarce government resources has created division between the two groups. There was a perception that there was a pattern of First Nations groups, such as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) taking over urban Aboriginal programming when their mandate is on-reserve with the AFN even rumored to be taking over the UAS after the completion of this last cycle. Many Aboriginal informants also felt that the federal government does not focus on the urban Aboriginal community enough in comparison to First Nations, when the majority of the Aboriginal population now lives in urban areas. The lack of focus on urban Aboriginal people along with the perceived threat of First Nations groups taking over urban Aboriginal programming was a cause for concern. This coupled with the fact that urban Aboriginal organizations must compete with non-Aboriginal groups as well as First Nations for funding left many of my Aboriginal informants feeling like they were getting the short end of the stick. One Aboriginal informant described how the lack of funding for urban Aboriginal organizations compared to First Nations has created a divide and conquer situation that could lead to urban Aboriginal organizations fighting with on-reserve groups, but acknowledged that that is wrong and nobody wants to do that (Aboriginal Informant B). Another Aboriginal informant expanded on this stating that urban Aboriginal groups do not want to take money away from First Nations because they barely get enough for their on-reserve communities as it is, but they want funding for urban Aboriginal programming without feeling that they have to compete with First Nations (Aboriginal Informant D).

Although the UP program is not intended to be an on-reserve funding source, urban Aboriginal organizations are concerned that their ongoing funding is threatened by First Nations. Whether that threat is real or not, it is clear that a lack of recognition for their funding needs has put a strain on urban Aboriginal groups. Urban Aboriginal organizations tend to provide services to all Aboriginal people regardless of Indian status and what First Nation they may belong to, which is well suited to the urban Aboriginal

population, which is diverse and made up of people from all across Canada. It is imperative that the federal government recognize the importance of supporting the urban Aboriginal community and their unique needs specifically, and continue to allocate funding for urban Aboriginal programming that is separate from First Nations who also have their own unique needs. This would alleviate competition and conflict between the two groups, both of which are in need of support.

6.4 Chapter Summary

Interview findings from my study as well as analysis of organizational documents show that neoliberal approaches to project funding impacted urban Aboriginal organizations delivering the UP program in both positive and negative ways. Benefits of this approach to project funding however appear to be limited compared to the inadequacies of the UP program's funding model. There is some evidence that partnerships added value to UAS/UP projects, and that having a singular objective of increasing urban Aboriginal participation in the economy was effective for linking program activities with participant employment and led to programming innovations. There were limitations to these benefits however as partnerships did not lead to project sustainability as intended, and the focus on economic participation created a disconnect between urban Aboriginal organizations and the needs of their clients.

Overall urban Aboriginal organizations expressed that there were many inadequacies to the design of the UP program of the UAS that negatively impacted project delivery. A major concern was that UP funding was term-limited to one year, which was seen as a barrier to forming partnerships, was an inadequate timeframe for both setting up and delivering projects, made it difficult to hire and retain quality staff, and often resulted in funding delays due to late proposal calls and funding decisions in a one year cycle. Other concerns included the fact that the amount of funding available was inadequate for project delivery with the need to constantly apply for additional funding and cobble together budgets putting a strain on non-profit organizations. As well, the competitive nature of the UP program could lead to inter and intra community conflict. Also, in most instances the UP program was not successful in its goal for sustaining projects. The next chapter will provide some solutions for improving on program inadequacies by offering recommendations for the role of urban Aboriginal program stakeholders going forward.

Chapter 7. Recommendations for Future Stakeholder Responsibility

Neoliberal approaches to governance and project delivery attempt to minimize the role of government while placing greater responsibility on others such as communities, organizations, and individuals to care for their own needs. In the case of the UP program in the last cycle of the UAS, the Government of Canada could be seen to be minimizing their responsibility for urban Aboriginal programming by limiting the amount and duration of funding available, and placing greater responsibility on urban Aboriginal communities and organizations to build partnerships, leverage additional dollars and sustain projects through other means, while also expecting provincial governments to take greater responsibility for urban Aboriginal programming. Results from this study have shown that that approach has not been successful as Aboriginal organizations have not been able to plan for sustainable projects without additional government funding in spite of their best efforts to build partnerships and leverage additional contributions. What level of responsibility then should be expected of the different stakeholders in urban Aboriginal programming beyond the completion of the UP program?

It is true that urban Aboriginal organizations should bear much of the responsibility in urban Aboriginal programming and one of their main responsibilities to their communities is the delivery of programs and services. This may seem obvious, but the importance of delivering projects in effective, meaningful, accountable and efficient ways, and the success that that yields should not be overlooked. This is a huge responsibility. This responsibility should extend also to the strategic planning aspects of urban Aboriginal programming in support of Indigenous self-determination, which is a right according to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008). One Aboriginal informant indicated for example that urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro Vancouver are becoming more self-determining, and if they receive government funding they want to make sure it is used in the most beneficial way to achieve the best outcomes (Aboriginal Informant G). Being that urban Aboriginal organizations are representative of urban Aboriginal peoples and can speak to their needs, it makes sense that they be involved in the planning processes that determine urban Aboriginal programming directions. Many Aboriginal informants agreed with this

sentiment with one indicating that when the UAS transitioned to the UP program the urban Aboriginal community lost their local authority for prioritizing their own needs (Aboriginal Informant C). By eliminating the decision making abilities of local steering committees during the transition to the UP program, the UAS moved away from Aboriginal self-determination, which is an important part of reconciliation, as was also pointed out by Aboriginal Informant C. Future directions for urban Aboriginal programming must reconsider the amount of responsibility given to urban Aboriginal organizations to plan, develop and deliver their own projects. Since 2016, the Government of Canada has claimed to be a full supporter of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (INAC, 2017a), and in supporting this Declaration should allow for off-reserve, urban Aboriginal organizations and communities to be self-determining in designing and delivering projects that best meet their communities' needs.

The overall consensus from the Aboriginal informants in my study was that the federal government should hold the greatest level of responsibility for urban Aboriginal programming in Canada. Urban Aboriginal communities are known to be highly marginalized, underperforming on socio-economic indicators compared to the rest of Canadian society. This level of inequality means that urban Aboriginal people require additional supports just to reach parity with Canada's non-Aboriginal population, and that support needs to be ongoing. The socio-economic conditions of Canada's urban Aboriginal people are a direct result of past and ongoing Canadian policies of colonialism and that legacy needs to be considered too when developing programming for urban Aboriginal people in Canada. For example, one Aboriginal informant stated:

> Because you're talking about a historically oppressed group, then the (federal) government needs to address that situation. I mean there's a legacy of colonization and that's the responsibility of government to deal with that, and to put some resources in there (Aboriginal Informant G).

Because the majority of Aboriginal Canadians now live in urban areas, if the Government of Canada is serious about reconciliation they must take responsibility for urban Aboriginal needs. Canada has plans for a national reconciliation framework that is based on a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, but unfortunately the framework makes no mention of working with urban Aboriginal communities (INAC, 2017b). This is a flaw that will need to be remedied because as one Aboriginal informant

stated, with the majority of Aboriginal people living in urban areas, the federal government is missing the boat if they ignore urban Indigenous communities, and the nation-to-nation relationship should be better defined to include the urban population (Aboriginal Informant F). The Government of Canada should take responsibility for urban Aboriginal programming due to its history of colonization and oppression over Aboriginal peoples and the impacts that has had on them, and needs to do more to include urban Aboriginal communities as part of its reconciliation framework.

Finally, many of the Aboriginal informants in my study indicated their belief that provincial and municipal governments could be doing more to support urban Aboriginal programming and people. This belief appears to be largely held over from previous cycles of the UAS when there were local steering committees. Some of my Aboriginal informants indicated that although the GVUAS and MVUAS steering committees were intended to have municipal and provincial as well as federal participation, participation from municipal and provincial governments was sporadic and they never brought any funding to the table (Aboriginal Informants E and J). It may be that things have changed since then, and they likely have considering that this last cycle of the UAS had an objective for better coordination with provincial governments, which in BC coincided with the provincial government's Off Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan, and the BC Government claims to have invested $385,000 into ORAAP programming for fiscal year 2015-2016. It appears though that provincial investments are not being made in a way that is evident to the local urban Aboriginal community in Metro Vancouver, likely because the Provincial Coordination Team for urban and off-reserve Aboriginal people did not include any local representation. In funding programming for urban off-reserve communities, the provincial government should include local communities as part of the planning process, which would help to create more awareness of provincial funding at the community level. A return to a city regional approach with local steering committees like in previous stages of the UAS could also serve to bring municipal governments back into the fold for urban Aboriginal planning.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

The intent of this Master of Urban Studies thesis project was to establish that over time and through different government administrations the Urban Aboriginal Strategy evolved, adhering more strictly to neoliberal principles of governance through each successive stage of program delivery. I then sought to explore how this intense neoliberalization of the UAS impacted proponent and potential proponent Aboriginal organizations as they attempted to deliver and sustain projects at the urban Aboriginal community level through a case study of Metro Vancouver. My research was guided by the question: How has a shift towards increasingly neoliberal government policies impacted Aboriginal organizations and their ability to deliver and sustain projects under the Urban Partnerships program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver from fiscal years 2014/2015 to 2016/2017?

In order to answer my research question I used a mixed methods approach that consisted of both content analysis and informant interviews. I analyzed official documents related to the UAS to track its neoliberal evolution demonstrating that in its final phase of project delivery as the Urban Partnerships program, which was introduced under the majority Harper Conservative Government of Canada, the UAS adhered to neoliberal approaches for social program delivery with the greatest intensity. In order to explore the impacts of this heightened neoliberalization of the UAS on proponent and potential proponent Aboriginal organizations I began by interviewing informants from urban Aboriginal community organizations in Metro Vancouver. After reaching a point of saturation with urban Aboriginal organizations, and concerned that this saturation may have been in part because all of my Aboriginal informants belonged to a coalition called the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, I decided to interview two non-Aboriginal organizations that had received UP funding to see how their experiences compared. I completed the interview phase of my research by also interviewing two federal government informants to gain some inside knowledge on the administration of the UP program. Finally, I also analyzed documents from informant organizations gathering budgetary data to gauge the effectiveness of the UP program's reliance on partner funding contributions to contribute to and sustain projects.

The results showed that there were some benefits to the neoliberal approach to social program delivery that was characteristic of the UP program of the UAS. However, there were limitations to those benefits, and UP program inadequacies outweighed the positives for urban Aboriginal organizations contracted to deliver services. A major focus of the UP program was to sustain the ongoing momentum of the initial UAS investment. However, the UP program did not create sustainability as much as offload responsibility to other funders, and it is not reasonable to expect that non-profit urban Aboriginal organizations could sustain projects without ongoing support. Concerns over UP program inadequacies were generally also expressed by the non-Aboriginal non-profit organizations in my study. However, because the scope of Aboriginal organizations is limited to providing services to the Aboriginal community, it may be that non-Aboriginal organizations were less impacted by inadequacies of the UP program due to their ability to seek out more mainstream funding from elsewhere. They are less dependent on Aboriginal specific funding opportunities.

My findings were consistent with Scott (2003); although her study was 14 years earlier and was not specific to Aboriginal organizations, the urban Aboriginal non-profits in my study, like the organizations in her study, had an increasing reliance on project based funding with limited opportunities for core funding. The implications of this are that it is more difficult for urban Aboriginal organizations to achieve their mission without core funding as they have to tailor their programs to the narrowly defined objectives of project based funding, and their ongoing existence is less secure with organizational sustainability uncertain. It appears that not much has improved in the non-profit sector in the last decade and a half, at least when it comes to urban Aboriginal organizations.

Findings were also largely consistent with Stern & Hall (2015) who described the competitive nature of proposal writing and project funding. My results, for example, showed that organizations with greater capacity for proposal writing were more likely to “win” UP program project dollars, and that proponents were expected to leverage additional funding to demonstrate their capacity for program delivery. Stern and Hall (2015) also described how neoliberal approaches to project funding often involve a quasi-independent agency being tasked with administering funding rather than a government ministry. This was important to consider in examining the UP program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy as funding was administered in the BC region through the BCAAFC rather than through INAC. My results did diverge from Stern & Hall (2015)

somewhat however as they described municipal organizations in Ontario being funded at basic levels with project funding being additional to base funding. Slightly over one half of the urban Aboriginal organizations in my study did not have core funding and therefore were not even funded at basic levels; rather they relied entirely on project based funds. Stern & Hall (2015) were not however studying urban Aboriginal communities and so it could be that urban Aboriginal organizations have less opportunity for core funding than more mainstream groups.

Several authors (Brody, 2007; Ilcan, 2009; Stern & Hall, 2015) described the role of responsible citizenship in neoliberal government policies, and my results confirmed this. Results showed that the UP program of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy had high expectations of responsible citizenship as INAC limited its funding responsibility expecting urban Aboriginal organizations to become more responsible for securing funds from elsewhere and sustaining projects without ongoing federal government support. As well, the focus on urban Aboriginal economic participation in the final stage of the UAS expected that urban Aboriginal citizens demonstrate responsibility by securing employment to care for themselves without any regard for potential socioeconomic disadvantages.

My results did diverge from much of the literature linking neoliberalism with Aboriginal people which purports that neoliberalism has provided opportunities for Aboriginal economic development (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Scott, 2006; Slowey 2008). Much of this research is based on on-reserve First Nations and commodification of land and natural resources in order to create opportunities and build partnerships. My results showed however that this approach is not appropriate for off-reserve, urban Aboriginal communities where they have no land base that they can use to leverage opportunities and partnerships, which was consistent with Walker (2005).

There are limitations to my study being that it focused on a single metropolitan region, Metro Vancouver. I believed that Metro Vancouver was typical of Canadian cities with large urban Aboriginal populations and so its selection as a case study could generate some explanatory insights into the UAS and UP program in general. I still believe that to be true, but one thing that is unique about the Vancouver region is the existence of the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council. The existence of this coalition created an obvious cohesion amongst urban Aboriginal organizations in Metro

Vancouver that could have impacted the results of my informant interviews, although I was able to interview some non-Aboriginal informants outside of MVAEC that essentially corroborated their results. Future research considerations could include evaluating the UAS and UP program through case studies of other Canadian cities in order to compare to and expand on the results from this case study of Metro Vancouver. A national survey of urban Aboriginal organizations in Canada and their relation to the UAS and UP program as I had initially considered is another option for future research. A larger sample frame that would result from such a survey would allow for a more quantitative study design that could generate results of statistical significance.

Another limitation of my study is that by focusing on urban Aboriginal organizations delivering the UP program of the UAS it overlooked how the neoliberal design of the UP program impacted program participants. Evaluating the success of the UP program on participant outcomes is another possibility for future research.

Although not the original intent of my study, the ways in which MVAEC members worked together as a coalition was interesting to document. Aboriginal informants mentioned other similar coalitions in Ottawa, Toronto, and Winnipeg and how together they are trying to form a Canadian Indigenous executive network to advocate for urban Aboriginal people at the national level. Exploring the impacts that such coalitions have in each city region as well as their attempt to form a national network and the resulting impacts on urban Aboriginal advocacy at a national level could be another area for future research.

Since ending on March 31, 2017, the UAS and UP program have been replaced by a new federal program under the Trudeau Liberal Government of Canada called Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP). Evaluating the effectiveness of the UPIP program, its impact on urban Aboriginal organizations, and comparing and contrasting it with its predecessor the UAS are other possible areas for future research.

At first glance the UPIP program does appear to address many of the concerns about the UAS and UP program that were highlighted in my study (INAC, 2017c). Within the UPIP there are now four funding streams as opposed to two under the UAS, one of which is a programs and services stream that provides support for project based initiatives and so has likely replaced the UP program. UPIP's programs and services

stream appears to allow for a broad range of services as opposed to a singular objective of economic participation, funding is now available for up to five years per project, and non-Indigenous proponents must demonstrate support from Indigenous organizations or the Indigenous community; based on the results of my study these appear to be improvements over the UAS. However, it is not clear if the UPIP will support existing projects as the caveat still exists that funding is not intended to support an already successful program or initiative, or a repetitive delivery offering. Five years of project funding is an improvement over one year, however improving the socioeconomic conditions of urban Aboriginal people, due to current levels of inequality, will require long-term federal government support and future policy should consider repetitive funding of projects and initiatives beyond five years so long as they remain relevant, address community needs, and continue to demonstrate success. This will relieve pressure on non-profit urban Aboriginal organizations which are often expected to redesign or reinvent programs, even though they remain successful, in order to satisfy the whims of their funders.

The UPIP also contains a new funding stream called organizational capacity which offers core funding of up to five years for urban Aboriginal organizations that provide programs or services to urban Indigenous peoples (INAC, 2017c). Hopefully this will address the lack of core funding that was evident among the urban Aboriginal informants in my study, although it is not yet known how many organizations will benefit from this core funding and at what levels.

The UAS was a response to debates over whether the federal government or provincial governments had responsibility for providing supports to urban Aboriginal people, and appeared to have a goal for encouraging provincial and territorial governments to take on the greater level of responsibility. I argued that this approach to intergovernmental offloading that characterized the UAS was reflective of neoliberal governance. It should be noted that debates over responsibility for urban Aboriginal people in Canada are not new, and can be traced back to the Constitution Act, 1867, but the UAS signaled a new type of response by the federal government to these debates, one that was rooted in neoliberalism. Both federal and provincial governments along with municipal governments have a role to play in supporting urban Aboriginal people. The federal government should not view greater provincial responsibility for urban Aboriginal programming as a means for decreasing their own responsibility. Ongoing support of the

federal government for off-reserve urban Aboriginal people and community organizations is needed and urban Aboriginal communities must hold the federal government accountable for this ongoing support.

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Appendix A.

Aboriginal Organizations Sampling Frame

Organization Name	Fiscal Year 2014/2015	Fiscal Year 2015/2016	Fiscal Year 2016/2017
MVAEC Organizations			
Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS)	60,000		
Aboriginal Front Door Society	13,000		
Aboriginal Mother Centre Society	60,000	91,000	85,000
Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network			
Circle of Eagles Lodge Society	60,000	91,000	65,000
Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents			
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre	30,000	91,000	85,000
Healing Our Spirit Society			
Helping Spiriti Lodge Society	60,000	91,000	30,000
Kekinow Native Housing Society			
Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association	35,500	91,000	
Lu'ma Native Housing Society	60,000	91,000	85,000
Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC)			85,000
NEC Native Education College	60,000	91,000	85,000
Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society			
Pacific Asssociation of First Nations Women			
Spirit of the Children Society			
Urban Native Youth Association	47,000	91,000	85,000
Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society			
Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre			
Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society	60,000		
Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society	60,000		
Vancouver Native Health Society	54,000	91,000	85,000
Vancouver Native Housing Society			
Warriors Against Violence Society			
Non-MVAEC Organizations			
Urban Spirit Foundation	60,000		

Figure A1. MVAEC and other Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Organizations Including UP Funding Received

Appendix B.

MVUAS 2010-2012 Call for Proposals

Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy Call for Proposals 2010- 2012

1. Available Funding

The Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS) Steering Committee is pleased to announce a Call for Proposals for projects supporting the community priority area of ***Urban Aboriginal Learning***.

The closing date for applications is **Monday, June 7, 2010** for projects starting in 2010 and ending on or before March 31, 2011. All project activities must be completed and all project funds must be expended by March 31, 2011.

In the interest of strategic management of urban Aboriginal issues and project sustainability, applicants requesting funds for 2010-2011 are also required to submit a Project Concept Paper (maximum 2 pages) which will detail how the 2010-2011 project can be strengthened or expanded in the 2011/2012 fiscal year.[1]

2. Background

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) is a community/government partnership initiative developed by the Government of Canada to better address issues facing urban Aboriginal Canadians. Through the Strategy, the Government of Canada partners with Aboriginal and community organizations, the private sector, and municipal and provincial governments to support initiatives that respond to local priorities.

The MVUAS Steering Committee is responsible for implementing the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Metro Vancouver in partnership with the BC Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. The Steering Committee is composed of Aboriginal political organizations, community and youth representatives, Elders, and the three levels of government. The names of MVUAS Steering Committee members are provided in section 10 of this document.

Based on research and the results of an intensive community engagement process, the MVUAS Steering Committee has developed a strategic plan for the fiscal years of 2010-2011 and 2011/2012. This Call for Proposals/Project Concept Papers represents the first step in the implementation of the 2010- 2012 MVUAS Strategic Plan.

3. Geographic Scope

Metro Vancouver UAS initiatives are focused only within the geographic area of the Metro Vancouver (legally defined as the Greater Vancouver Regional District). Please refer to http://www.metrovancouver.org/Pages/default.aspx for a detailed map of the Metro Vancouver area.

[1] For the purposes of the Federal Government, the fiscal year is April 1st to March 31st.

4. Eligible Projects

The Mission of the MVUAS is as follows:

> The MVUAS Steering Committee is dedicated to improving the lives of Urban Aboriginal people by supporting culturally based learning initiatives that are responsive to the health & wellness and values of Aboriginal communities.

As a result, the Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy Committee has identified *Urban Aboriginal Learning* our priority area for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 fiscal years.

Within this overarching priority, proposed projects must achieve one or more of the following objectives:

Urban Aboriginal Learning

A) Life Skills: Empowering people to effectively deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Examples include but are not limited to: leadership training, skill building, problem solving, self-care, literacy, nutrition, communication and inter-personal skills, etc...

B) Staying in School (up to Grade 12): Promote success in school. Examples include but are not limited to: culturally inclusive learning environments, early childhood supports, tutoring, family supports, extra curricular activities, literacy, outreach services, and after school programs, etc...

C) Pursuit of Higher Education: Provide comprehensive programming designed to address skills, knowledge and supports essential to Aboriginal student success in academic studies and trades.

D) Developing Experiential Based Work Skills: Provide pre-employment training, employment training and/ or job placements. Examples include but are not limited to: on the job training, pre-apprentice, apprenticeships, internships, supports and job coaching, etc...

E) Traditional Transfer of Knowledge: Provide opportunities to explore and gain a sense of cultural identity and belonging by planting seeds of knowledge.

F) Traditional Transfer of Knowledge: Provide opportunities for Aboriginal knowledge keepers to share their wisdom and traditional knowledge with communities.

Please Note:

If an application addresses more than one of the MVUAS objectives noted above, applicants are asked to identify which objective is the primary focus of their initiative.

If applicable, applicants can identify how their project demonstrates linkage to other MVUAS learning objectives as a secondary focus area of their project.

The funding priority of the MVUAS is for 2 year projects. As such, applicants are required to include a Project Concept Paper (maximum 2 pages) detailing how the 2010/2011 project could be strengthened or expanded in 2011/2012 fiscal year. The Project Concept Paper should include a discussion on potential partnerships and collaborations, funding considerations, and long term sustainability.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT FUNDING FOR 2010/2011 BY THE MVUAS DOES NOT GUARANTEE CONTINUED FUNDING FOR 2011/2012.

Applicants that are approved for 2010/2011 MVUAS funding and enter into a Contribution Agreement with BC OFI will be asked to submit an interim narrative report, financial statements and a Proposal for 2011-2012 MVUAS funding (including a budget for activities in the 2011-2012 fiscal year) in January, 2011.

In order to determine whether 2010-2011 MVUAS projects are eligible for 2011-2012 MVUAS funding, the Steering Committee will review all 2010-2011 MVUAS funded projects to determine if the projects are on-track to achieve the activities noted in their Contribution Agreement with BC OFI. Also, all Proposals for 2011-2012 funding will be assessed against the criteria noted in this Call for Proposals. BC OFI will inform proponents prior to March 31, 2011 as to whether their project has been approved for 2011-12 MVUAS funding.

5. Eligible Proponents

Metro Vancouver based not-for-profit organizations, individuals, municipal governments, educational institutions, Aboriginal organizations, and service organizations that serve Aboriginal people, are eligible to receive Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding. For-profit enterprises are eligible for funding providing that the project funds are used to offset project costs and do not contribute to a profit for the enterprise.

Please note that preference will be given to funding Aboriginal organizations or those non-Aboriginal organizations that have letters that demonstrate the involvement and support of Aboriginal organization(s), Aboriginal Advisory Committee(s) or Elder(s).

6. Eligible Expenditures

Eligible and Ineligible expenses can found in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Program Guidelines: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/ofi/uas/tnc-eng.asp

Eligible expenditures under the Program Guidelines of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy include costs associated with the initiative, planning and assessment, research and assessment, and administration. All eligible expenditures must be linked to advancing the objectives of the UAS.

Ineligible expenditures include:

- Purchase of land and buildings;
- Operations of repair/capital improvements and maintenance of land and/or buildings;

- Costs financed by or eligible for financing and likely to be financed by other sources of funding;
- Costs not related to the delivery of the proposed eligible activities.

7. Application Requirements

Each proposal must contain:

1. A description of how the project Proposal quality demonstrates activities or programming that lead to an increased knowledge and awareness in one or more of the following areas"
    - Aboriginal values, traditions and/ or teachings;
    - Honouring the diversity of Aboriginal cultures;
    - Ways of effectively dealing with racism and discrimination

2. A description of the project, including information about the organization proposing the work. Please note that preference will be given to funding Aboriginal organizations or those non-Aboriginal organizations that have letters that demonstrate the involvement and support of Aboriginal organization(s), Aboriginal Advisory Committee(s) or Elder(s);

3. A description of how the project impacts one or more of the MVUAS priority areas described in Section 4 of this document, including how the project incorporates the culturally based health & wellness values of the Aboriginal community;

4. A project budget including detailed notes related to both expenditures and revenues (Please complete attached Annex A);

5. As MVUAS strives to match/leverage funding, a description of project partnerships, including a list of financial and in-kind contributors to the project and the amount of their contributions(Please complete attached Annex A);

6. A description of the qualifications and related experience that will demonstrate the capacity of those who will be implementing and/or delivering the project;

7. A schedule of the Activities and Milestones which demonstrate how the project will be implemented by March 31, 2011;

8. An evaluation plan that will measure the project outcomes, including indicators of success;

9. The funding priority of the MVUAS is for 2 year projects. As such, applicants are required to include a Project Concept Paper (maximum 2 pages) detailing how the 2010-11project could be strengthened or expanded in 2011-2012 fiscal year. The Project Concept Paper must include a discussion on potential partnerships and collaborations, funding considerations, and long term sustainability.

10. A signed declaration (Please complete attached Annex B) to ensure:
    - The information in the application is accurate and complete;
    - The application is made on behalf of the organization(s), with their full knowledge and consent;
    - Government representatives may contact other government funders to discuss the proposal;
    - No person involved in this project is in conflict with the post-employment guidelines of the Government of Canada;

- If funding is approved, the applicant will be required to enter into a formal agreement with the Government of Canada that will outline the funding terms and conditions.

Proposals should be submitted in electronic format (preferable MS Word for Windows or Adobe PDF) or in hard copy by mail for the MVUAS Steering Committee. Proposals can be up to a maximum of 5 pages (appendices not included).The signed declaration can be faxed or mailed.

Proposals must be submitted by 8 a.m. on June 7, 2010 to:

Michael Ferguson
Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy
BC Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
7th floor - 1138 Melville Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4S3
Phone: 604-775-6342
Fax: 604-666-2206

Please note: Michael Ferguson will confirm by email that the MVUAS has received your proposal and supporting documentation including:

- **The proposal (maximum 5 pages);**
- **The Project Concept Paper (maximum 2 pages);**
- **Annex A - Leveraging & Budget information;**
- **Annex B- MVUAS Declaration Statement.**

If you do not receive confirmation by email within 72 hours, please contact Michael Ferguson by phone.

8. Criteria

Proposals will be assessed on, but not necessarily limited to, the following criteria:

1) Proposal quality demonstrates activities or programming that lead to an increased knowledge and awareness in one or more of the following areas"
    a. Aboriginal values, traditions and/ or teachings;
    b. Honouring the diversity of Aboriginal cultures;

c. Effective methods of dealing with racism and discrimination

2) Proposal quality demonstrated by the clarity and organization of the work plan; evidence of understanding the issues related to the Aboriginal communities of Metro Vancouver. Please note that preference will be given to funding Aboriginal organizations or those non-Aboriginal organizations that have letters that demonstrate the involvement and support of Aboriginal organization(s), Aboriginal Advisory Committee(s) or Elder(s);

3) Proposal quality outlining how the project/program contributes to the MVUAS priority areas as outlined in Section 4 of this document, including how the project incorporates the culturally based health & wellness values of the Aboriginal community;

4) Proposal demonstrates alignment of services - proposal demonstrates that new and existing services have been aligned to better serve urban Aboriginal residents of Metro Vancouver;

5) Partnership development demonstrated by quality and number of partnerships involved in developing and/or delivering the project;

IMPORTANT: The UAS has a focus on partnership development and enhancement. Funding priority will be given to applications that can demonstrate a minimum of 50% contribution from municipal/provincial funding sources, and/or other funding partners. In-kind contributions must be clearly illustrated in the proposal, and supported in writing. Anticipated or existing financial support from other sources must be clearly illustrated and supported in writing.

6) Capability/experience of the proponent demonstrated by previous involvement in the management of similar projects, experience and qualifications of staff;

7) Project management evidenced by the ability to meet the project goals within the time-frames and financial resources, reasonableness of costs;

8) Proposal demonstrates an evaluation process that will measure performance and results;

9) Project Concept Paper quality demonstrated by clarity of vision for the project in 2011-2012; degree to which the proponent has considered partnership building and collaboration in developing the Project Concept Paper.

9. Selection Process

Applications will be selected for funding after being reviewed by members of the Metro Vancouver UAS Steering Committee. The MVUAS has a conflict of interest policy for Steering Committee members which is available upon request and which will be followed in the event that one or more of the organizations with which Steering Committee members are affiliated submits a proposal.

The Steering Committee will allocate a total of approximately $750,000 for 2010/2011.

Successful applicants will be notified by Friday, June 18, 2010. Only successful applicants will be contacted. A final funding decision is contingent on the applicant entering into a contractual agreement with the Office of the federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians (OFI). Such an agreement will take place following a thorough review by an OFI Project Officer.

10. MVUAS Steering Committee Members

Jacquie Adams, Women, Children & Families Advocate & MVUAS Co-Chair	Allyson Rowe, BC Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians & MVUAS Co-Chair
Winston Thompson, Job Skills Advocate	Cori Klesinger, Life Skills Advocate
Artemis Fire, Member at Large	John Webster, Member at Large
Jennifer Mervyn, Member at Large	Christina Gray, Youth
Melissa Frost, Youth	Melinda Bige, Youth
Ken Fisher, Elder	Henry Hall, Métis Nation BC Representative
Aileen Murphy, City of Surrey	Mariann Burka, British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Andrew Pask, City of Vancouver	

11. Contact Information

Further inquiries about the Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy and this Call for Proposals may be directed to:

Michael Ferguson
Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS) City Coordinator
Email: michael.ferguson@ainc-inac.gc.ca
Tel: 604.775.6342
Fax: 604.666.2206