



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women



Community Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women

Sovereign Bodies Institute
Melissa Shouting, BHSc 2019
Indigenous Health Researcher & Analyst

Intro

Leader
board



Quick Introduction

- B. HSc. (2019): University of Lethbridge
 - Major in Public Health
 - Minor in Aboriginal Health
- Sovereign Bodies Institute
 - Inaugural Fellowship Recipient
- Blackfoot, Plains Cree, and Gros Ventre
- Member of the Blackfoot Confederacy
 - Kainai Nation
- Area of Focus is Indigenous Health:
 - Determinants of Health
 - Gender Issues
 - Communicable Diseases (HIV)



Agenda

1

The Sovereign Bodies Institute

2

The MMIWG Database

3

Research within the Institute

4

A model for Developing Centers

5

Questions



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women



Sovereign Bodies Institute

What
is it?

What
do we
do


Our
Commitment

Our
Partnerships



What is the Institute?

- SBI is a home for generating new knowledge and understandings of how Indigenous nations and communities are impacted by gender and sexual violence, and how they may continue to work towards healing and freedom from such violence.



What do we do

- Sovereign Bodies Institute (SBI) builds on Indigenous traditions of data gathering and knowledge transfer to create, disseminate, and implements research on gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people.



SBI is Committed to

- conducting, supporting, and mobilizing culturally and community-engaged research on gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people.
- uplifting Indigenous researchers, knowledge keepers, and data visualists in their work to research and disseminate data on gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people
- empowering Indigenous communities and nations to continue their work to end gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people through data-driven partnerships that enhance research efforts, develop best practices, and transform data to action to protect and heal their people.



Our Partnerships

- SBI partners with tribal nations, Indigenous organizers and scholars, and key community institutions to take on research projects that build capacity to provide enhanced services to survivors, provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people, and empower communities to mobilize against this continued violence.
- These partnerships allow SBI staff to work directly with a diverse array of communities to generate knowledge and design innovative interventions, grounded in local contexts, yet of benefit to Indigenous people and their nations and communities more broadly.
- We are an affiliate of the Seventh Generation Fund, a non-profit at the for front of Indigenous leadership for 40 years



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women



The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Database

Intro

Submit
Data

Request
Data

Key
Stats

The MMIW Database

- The MMIW Database logs cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people, from 1900 to the present.
- There are many lists and sources of information online, but no central database that is routinely updated, spans beyond colonial borders, and thoroughly logs important aspects of the data, and overall, there is a chronic lack of data on this violence.
- The Database works to address that need, by maintaining a comprehensive resource to support community members, advocates, activists, and researchers in their work towards justice for our stolen sisters.

INFO

Information

The kind of information that the database cares for and houses is determined by through consultation with Indigenous tribes and communities, both in the United States and Canada. The database currently logs the following information:

- Information about the victims
- Information about the perpetrators
- Information about the violence
- About the police & court response
- Geography

Victims

Perpetrators


Type
of
Violence

Police
& Court
Response

Geography

Victims

- Name
- Indigenous name and translation
- Tribal Affiliation(s)
- Birth date
- Age
- Children (if any)
- Was MMIWG case prevalent in their family




Information on the Perpetrator

- Race
- Gender
- Relationship to the victim

About the Violence

- Missing or murdered
- Incident date
- Violence perpetrated against murder victims after they are deceased
- Relevant issues
 - domestic violence
 - sexual assault
 - sex work
 - human trafficking
 - foster care
 - police brutality
 - trans victim
 - death in custody
 - unsheltered or housed
 - history of attending residential school or boarding school



About the Police & Court Response

- Reward amount (if any)
- Case classification
- Conviction status
- Which entities located the individuals
 - deceased or not




Geography

- City
- State/Province
- Country
- Location type
 - Tribal land
 - Rural vs. Urban

Submitting Data

- Since the database started in 2015, there have been an average of 250-300 new MMIWG cases across the US and Canada per year.
- If we use this as a base number for estimating numbers for prior years, it would mean the database is missing approximately 20, 000 cases.
- This doesn't account for time periods where there would be a spike in potential confounders in time (60's scoop and residential schools)

INFO


- 
- Case data
 - Who you are
 - Researcher, Journalist, Community member, or Advocate.
 - Did relationship with the victim
 - Data Source
 - Where did you get this information from?
 - Are there news articles, obituaries, or records that can verify that data.
 - Sensitive Information
 - Is there any information that you don't want shared with the general public, please make it clear.

An example would be that individuals would want their loved one counted within the database, but doesn't want their information circulated. In this case we would enter "name withheld" to respect their privacy.



Requesting Data from the Database

- Access to the Database is available on a "as-requested" basis. We are deeply committed to upholding the sacredness of the data, and do not grant access to individuals or institutions who have not sufficiently demonstrated that they are capable to work with and care for the data in a good way, consistent with Indigenous values.
- At this time, the database does not grant access to raw data to non-Indigenous scholars, colonial government agencies, or the press. We also do not grant access for use in classroom settings or for student projects, unless adequate emotional supports will be in place in or outside the classroom.

- 
- Over 1/2 of these case are murder cases
 - About 40% of the cases are from the US: 54 states and provinces and over 450 tribal nations are represented
 - Nearly 11% of cases are domestic violence related
 - 4% of cases are reported as involving sexual assault
 - 6% of victims are reported as sex workers or victims of sex trafficking
 - 1/3 of the cases are girls under the ages of 18 and the average age is 26
 - 77% of cases revealed intersections between foster-care and one of the following: sexual assault, domestic violence, or sex trafficking
 - Mothers disproportionately represent reported murder cases
 - 37 cases of police brutality
 - 18 trans women or two spirit victims



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women



**Research within
the Institute:
Fellowships and
Existing Projects**

Tribal
Courts &
MMIW

MMIW &
Say Her
Name

Fellowships

Tribal Courts & MMIW

- This project aims to generate a clear and thorough understanding of the scale and dynamics of cases of trafficked, missing, and murdered Native American women and children in Northwestern California, and design and implement a pilot blue print for tribes to intervene in and prevent such cases.
- This project is a collaboration between Judge Abby Abinanti and the Yorok Tribal Court, SBI partnering scholar Blythe George, and SBI Executive Director Annita Lucchesi.



Uniting Against Femicide

Uniting Against Femicide builds on scholarship by Shanya Cordis & Stephanie Lumsden, which theorizes the connections between femicide and Black & Indigenous women. This work grew out of a desire to mutually support and collectively organize against the violent deaths of Black and Indigenous women, and a need to determine how to build those relations in a good way, highlighting our shared experiences and connections, while also honouring our shared differences between our communities. This project aims to bring both communities together in community workshops to create dialogue on their experiences of deaths and disappearances of women and girls in their communities to work together to end violence.



Research Fellowships

- SBI provides Research & Artist Fellowships to Indigenous scholars, community organizers, and data visualists engaged in critical, innovative work to help us better understand, address, and prevent gender and sexual violence against Indigenous people.
- For 2019, SBI has selected two Leading Community Researchers , and two Artist leading community researchers . We are proud of the inter-disciplinary, diversity, intellect, and heart each one brings to the work they are doing with SBI and for our peoples.

#1


#2

#3

#4




Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót
aistamátstohkssin:
A Model for Developing
Culturally Grounded Centers
for Indigenous Women & Girls
Researcher: Melissa Shouting



Health Impacts of MMIW on Families Researcher: Brit Reed

This project assesses the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health impacts of MMIWG cases on their families, with the aim of developing best practices for service providers, policy makers, and community members who seek to support and care for them.



Butterflies in Spirit Researcher: Lorelei Williams

- This project is aimed at producing an understanding and awareness of how dance can be utilized as healing practice for both Indigenous survivors of violence and their families, as well as those impacted by the crisis of MMIWG.
- This project is aimed at producing an understanding and awareness of how dance can be utilized as healing practice for both Indigenous survivors of violence and their families, as well as those impacted by the crisis of MMIWG.



Unbottling Stolen Relatives Researcher: Elizabeth Skye

- Unbottling the Tragedy of Stolen Relatives explores the use of pottery to visualize data and tell stories on missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, and two spirit people.
- In this work, Artist Fellow Elizabeth Skye is consulting with families of MMIWG2 to create personalized, unique bottles representing individual MMIWG2 cases, with the aim of creating an impactful representation of MMIWG2 data, and fostering critical dialogue on this violence.



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women

Kaaahsinniinikssi Ot aistamatstohkssin


A Model for Developing
Culturally Grounded
Centers for Indigenous
Women and Girls


INFO

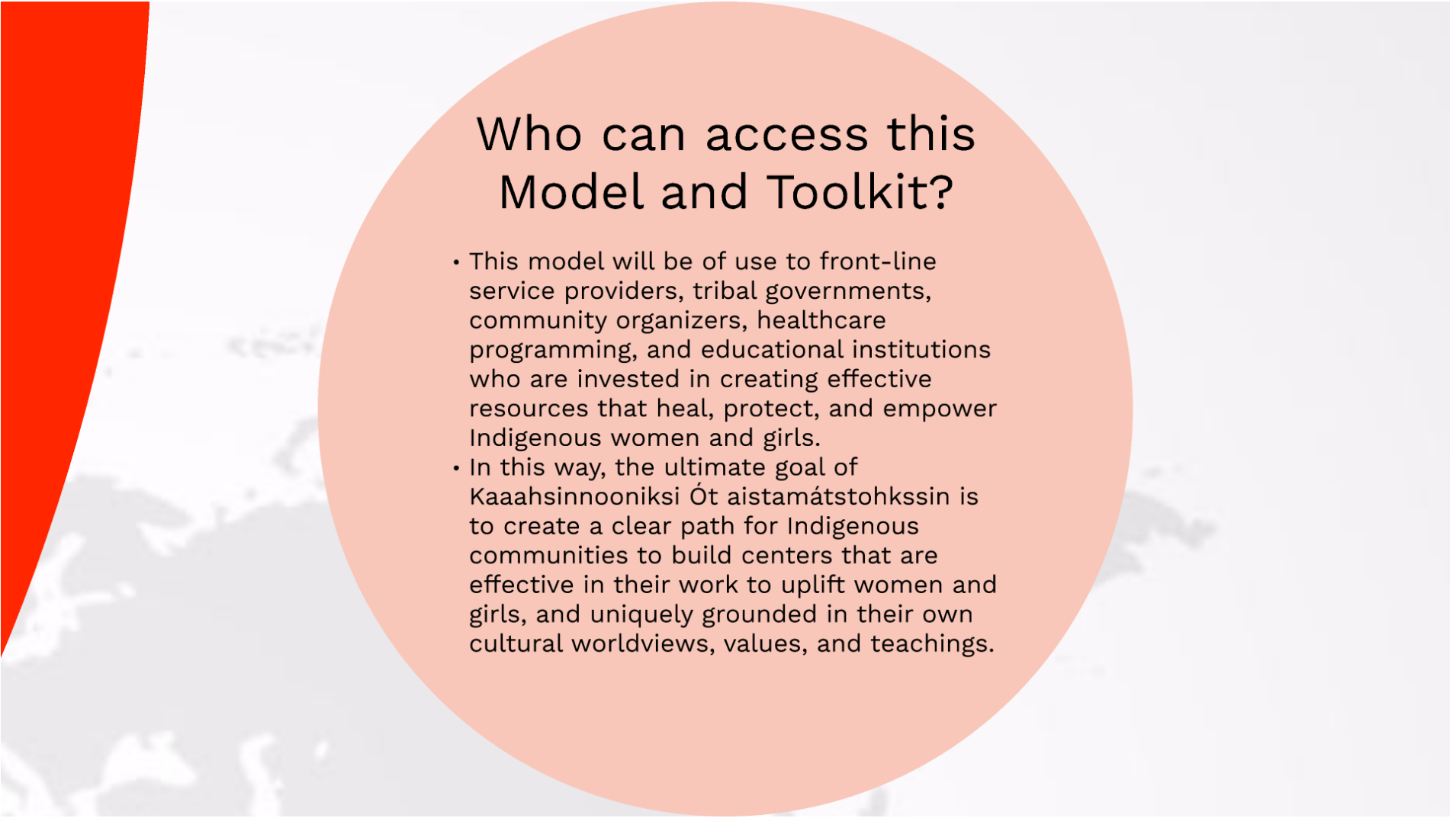
Back-
ground

Access

Method

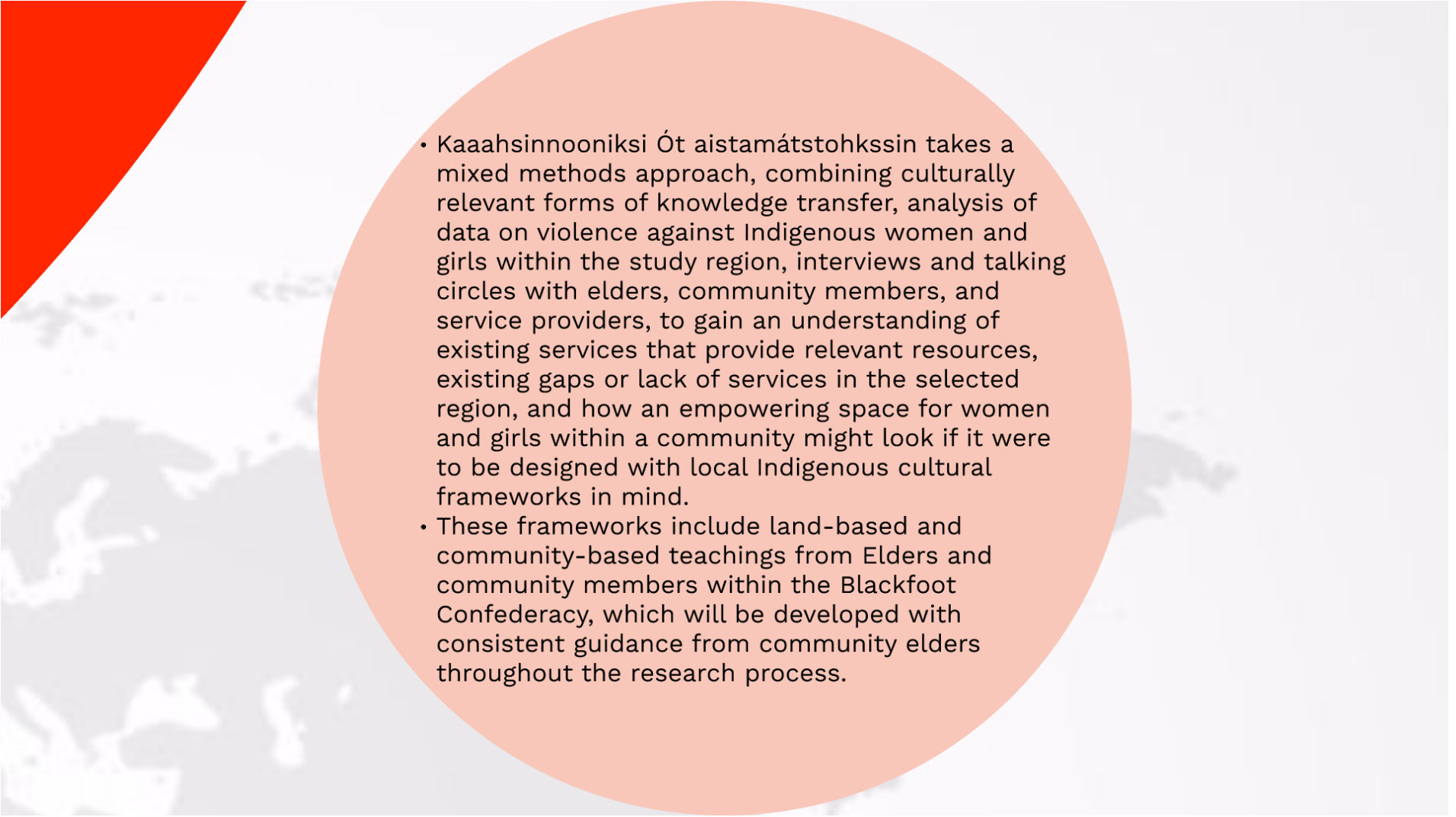
- 
- Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót aistamátstohkssin aims to create a best practice model and toolkit for developing culturally-grounded centers for Indigenous women and girls, that support revitalization of traditional leadership roles.
 - Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót aistamátstohkssin will be conducted in territory belonging to the Blackfoot Confederacy (areas in southern Alberta and northern Montana), and will be grounded in Blackfoot communities and culture, with the aim of developing a blueprint for revitalizing Blackfoot women and girls' traditional forms of leadership.
 - However, this blueprint will be relevant to other Indigenous nations and communities, as the adjoining toolkit will provide a self-reflexive path for developing such centers grounded in their own culture and community needs.

- 
- This project aims to bring attention to those stories and ways of existence of our Grandparents.
 - Historically, Blackfoot people belonged to a matriarchal society, and our grandmothers held, and continue to hold, extensive knowledge that guides our people.
 - Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót aistamátstohkssin means “the teachings of our grandparents”. Kaaahsinnooniksi is a collective term for grandparents in a family structure sense and more often describes those individuals two generations before us. Our grandparents are a part of the alliances from which knowing, and knowledge are obtained and often offer guidance throughout our lifespan. Their teachings are integral to traditional ways of knowing and are vital to establishing the initial and essential steps in achieving independence that is self-sufficient and balanced. These teachings are essential in healing and regenerating our ways of knowing among Indigenous women and girls and are fundamental to creating this model.



Who can access this Model and Toolkit?

- This model will be of use to front-line service providers, tribal governments, community organizers, healthcare programming, and educational institutions who are invested in creating effective resources that heal, protect, and empower Indigenous women and girls.
- In this way, the ultimate goal of Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót aistamátstohkssin is to create a clear path for Indigenous communities to build centers that are effective in their work to uplift women and girls, and uniquely grounded in their own cultural worldviews, values, and teachings.

- 
- Kaaahsinnooniksi Ót aistamátstohkssin takes a mixed methods approach, combining culturally relevant forms of knowledge transfer, analysis of data on violence against Indigenous women and girls within the study region, interviews and talking circles with elders, community members, and service providers, to gain an understanding of existing services that provide relevant resources, existing gaps or lack of services in the selected region, and how an empowering space for women and girls within a community might look if it were to be designed with local Indigenous cultural frameworks in mind.
 - These frameworks include land-based and community-based teachings from Elders and community members within the Blackfoot Confederacy, which will be developed with consistent guidance from community elders throughout the research process.



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women

Question time

Contact Information

Sovereign Bodies Institute website:

- sovereign-bodies.org

Email:

- mmiwdatabase@sovereign-bodies.org
- annita@sovereign-bodies.org
- melissa.shouting@uleth.ca



Community-Driven Data on Violence Against Unsheltered Indigenous Women