

# PLURAL project update



## Hello! We have a lot to share

It feels great to finally reach out to you! We have been quiet during the past months but we have been like busy bees at work. We have mostly been collecting data and analyzing it. Data includes the discussions from the focus groups and the photovoices, the photographs and interviews. The photo above is from March 2020, when we launched the project and had our very first meeting. It was taken at the University of Northern BC, just a week before the World closed . . . Here's what we want to share:

1

RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

2

DATA ANALYSIS

3

WHAT NEXT?



John Grogan joined the team from Robson Valley and we can't believe our luck!



Glory Apantaku was with us from early on. She took much of the heavy lifting of recruitment, data collection and analysis



Theresa Healy is our solid rock (star)! Amongst other things, she lead the photovoice with the New Hope Society

## Gathering knowledge - the first steps

One of the first things we did was to recruit participants. Recruitment was a team effort and took many forms.

Attilio Fiumarella, the photographer we are working with, traveled through Northern BC in October 2020 and left posters and flyers of the project wherever he could. He reported to have eaten the biggest, most delicious pancake in his life and to have seen the most beautiful landscapes. COVID-19 was already spooking so he kept away from people and mingled more with the wildlife.



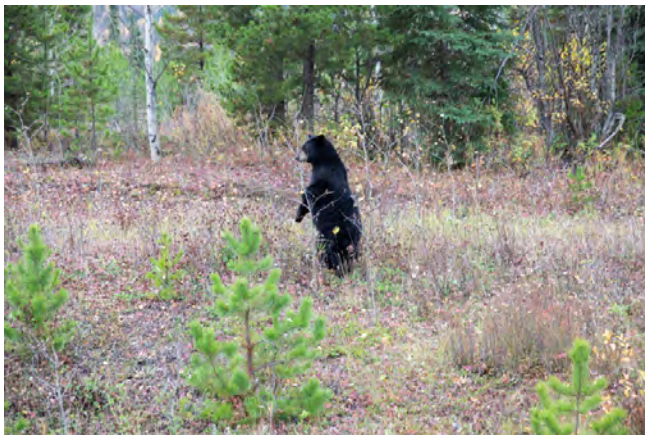
Vanderhoof



Chetwynd



Prince George



Between Terrace and Smithers



Alexandria

From the office, we contacted many organizations, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, education

centres and posted announcements through the Patient Voice Network. We also received many leads and direct contacts from those who participated.

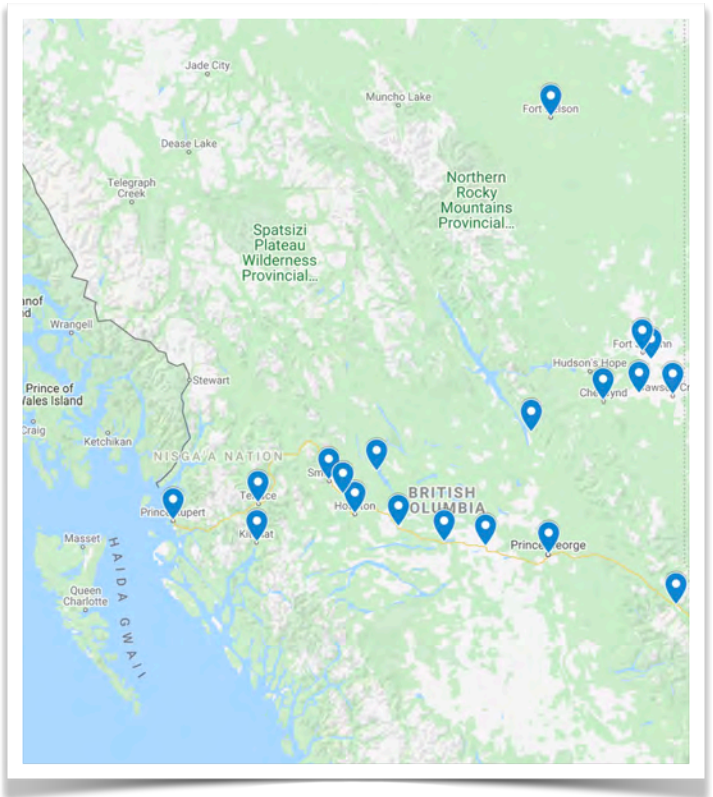
## All the bits and bobs

This project is made of many pieces of a puzzle that we are now working to put together

The voices from the North are creating a patchwork of great minds and experiences that are spread across British Columbia. On this page, you see a map of the places in Northern BC where our participants live. This includes you!

We have spoken with community members with lived experience of using the healthcare system, health professionals including doctors and nurses, health decision makers such as medical officers, NGOs professionals, and decision makers such as municipal officials, including mayors.

In these conversations, we learned about healthcare organization in the North, how communities advocate for themselves and what can be done better.



### List of places where participants are from:

Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat, Smithers, Telkwa (Quick), Houston, Burns Lake, Granisle, Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof, Prince George, McBride, Mackenzie, Chetwynd, Groundbirch (Dawson Creek), Dawson Creek, Taylor, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson

## WHAT EXACTLY DID WE DO?

Between December 2020 and March 2021 we have done **three focus groups** and **two photovoices online**. Though conference video calls we gathered people around a virtual table to discuss what makes their community a healthy place to live in and the obstacles they face in achieving a healthy lifestyle.

In June 2021 we did **an in-person photovoice** with members of the New Hope Society. New Hope is a support organization for sex workers and marginalized women based on the unceded and ancestral territories of the Lheidli T'enneh (Prince George).

We did **31 in-depth interviews** (around 60 minutes long) over the phone in order to get more in-depth knowledge and perspectives on what health care services can be provided with the money available.

All these data collection events have been documented and analyzed by looking for common themes by three researchers based at the University of British Columbia and the University of Northern British Columbia.

## What did you tell us?

Truth be told, we are still processing all the richness in the data... But here is a summary so far of the topics that were shared

### Attributes of a healthy community

- Access to recreation opportunities
- Access to nature and outdoors
- Social connections

### Health and social care infrastructure

- Transportation, healthcare infrastructure, Telehealth, housing

### Community involvement in Health Authority (HA) decision making

- Challenges and enablers of engagement and collaboration with the HA

### Facilitators of healthcare in rural and remote communities

- Telehealth
- Availability of allied healthcare services (dentists, optometrists, physiotherapists, etc.)
- Good access to primary care services (nurses and family doctors)
- Incentives and programs to attract and retain healthcare providers
- Community-based travel support
- Collaboration within community agencies
- Community funding of health and social care programs



### Ideas around quality improvement

- Ideas to improve access to care and the quality of the services provided

### Barriers to healthcare in rural and remote communities

- Lack of primary care, specialist care, dental care and allied health services
- Challenges in accessing telehealth (either because it is not offered, or the infrastructure is poor)
- Poor care-coordination and limited support for patients to navigate the health system
- Maternity care offered outside the community
- Injustice and inequities in access to care
- Financial barriers
- Shortage of providers
- Inadequate travel and transportation

## What next?

### We need to share the results in more detail to a wider audience

You have shared with us important information about what it is like to access healthcare in Northern BC. You have not only talked about the highlights and challenges, but you have also communicated practical ideas of what could be improved and how.

We think all these data could be shared with:

- **Researchers** to help them design research questions and projects which are closer aligned with the priorities and realities of people living in Northern BC;
- **Decision makers** within government and the health authority to communicate issues of importance to communities and their ideas.
- **Community members** to highlight a common voice, show the amazing photographs that participants took and incite discussions about health.



If you want to learn more or want to be involved in the project, get in touch with us and visit our website:

<https://www.pluralbc.org>

### Save the date!

On **November 23**, you can hear about this and other interesting projects at the **BC Rural Health Research Exchange free on-line event**. To learn more, visit their website:

<https://rccbc.ca/bchrhx>

## WAYS TO BE INVOLVED AND WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

**Photovoice book** - the photographs and statements from the photovoice will be compiled in a book. We want to offer a copy of the book to each participant and distribute it across libraries, governmental and non-governmental organizations in BC

**Photo exhibition** - would you like to see a photo exhibition of this project in your community? We are planning to do a few exhibitions in Northern BC and in the Lower Mainland in the Spring/Summer 2022. Get in touch if you want to know more or lend a hand to one of these events in your community

**Video** - We will invite the photovoice participants to engage in a video that shows their photographs along with their narration. This will be available to everyone through YouTube

**Research articles and conference** - we will report the methods and the findings to the research community through publications in academic journals and academic conferences

**Website** - Information about the project, contacts and resources will be available in our website

## THE TEAM



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Theresa Healy



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Lara Frederick

## COLLABORATIONS



**Attilio Fiumarella** is supporting with graphic design, the photovoice, the exhibitions and the photobook. He is a visual artist working with photography and his work is based on social landscape, community engagement and participatory projects.



**Jasmine Thomas** provided consultancy for the photovoice. Jasmine is a Dene woman and frog clan member currently residing in Saik'uz. She has been involved in various national and community-driven research projects and other educational initiatives related to the inter-connectedness of the environment, health, and community well-being. Jasmine has done advocacy work around environmental, climate, and social justice issues based upon an Indigenous rights framework. She is currently serving as an elected Councillor for Saik'uz.



We have had the honour to meet and consult with the team from the Health Arts Research Centre (**HARC**). The centre is intended as part of an integrated response to a need for a knowledge centre dedicated to renewing health in Northern BC through creative, geographically, and socio-culturally specific means and as an agent for building capacity to bring that knowledge into practice, especially in the North, and especially for Indigenous communities.

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