

WHISTLER'S

Vital Signs

2019 REPORT

Vital Cafés

Community Conversations 2019



Whistler
Community
Foundation

20
years of giving
1999-2019

Vital Cafés

Community Conversations 2019

In 2019, the Whistler Community Foundation hosted a series of nine Vital Cafés. These conversations were focused on significant topics identified in previous Whistler's Vital Signs reports. The Vital Cafés engaged participants to delve deeper into these topics with the goal to inspire individual action and improve the quality of life in Whistler. Based on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our Vital Cafés recognized the importance of examining these topics through a local lens.



United Nations Sustainability Goals



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal framework and plan to realize an improved and more sustainable future for all. The SDGs were used to help chart the areas of focus for Whistler in this Vital Signs report.

MINDFULNESS

"The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something. To be attentive to experiences and actions occurring in the present moment and surrounding environment."
Warren Brown and Ryan, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (2003).

ECOLOGICAL THINKING

Ecological thinking means to think consciously to understand that humans are not separate from nature.

What is the effect of my choice of product or my actions on Whistler's ecology?

Our economy is based on tourism – yet in 15-20 years there may not be winter tourism



Whistler receives approximately **3 million overnight and non-overnight visitors** each year (**approximately 45 per cent in winter and 55 per cent in summer**).

This year, approximately **75 LOCAL**, ecology-based programs have engaged over **10,000 PEOPLE** by providing education through enjoyment.



Q: What does ecological thinking mean to you?

A: Knowing that things are all (inter)connected, dependent on each other to function effectively.

Q: If we balance the environment and the economy, what do we gain when we think ecologically?

A: Our location, our mountains, lakes, it is this environment that make us unique. It is our economy. People come from cities to experience our environment. We need to preserve that.

Q: What can individuals do to advance the concept of ecological thinking?

FIRST we need to think, "what will we lose?" vs. "what is to be gained?"

A: To be more self-aware of the effect that our actions have on the environment and employ key economies based on natural balance.

TURNING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO A CLIMATE OF CHANGE

"What is interesting about climate change is many of the solutions can happen at the local scale." *Claire Ruddy, AWARE*

Q: Have you personally seen or experienced the effects of climate change? If so, how?

A: Yes, I have witnessed droughts, forest fires, the acidification of oceans, receding glaciers and extreme weather.

Q: Imagine that in 10-years' time Whistler has rapidly taken action on climate change and is back on track to meet its greenhouse gas emissions targets. What did it take to get us there?

- A:**
- Championed an education program
 - Instigated free and accessible local & regional transit
 - Eliminated single use plastic
 - Created building codes around waste and size of housing
 - Implemented zero waste goals
 - Cap on visitation and single-occupancy vehicles

Q: We all know we can reduce climate impacts by taking the bus, using an electric car, reducing consumption and waste, changing our diets etc. So why are we slow to make these changes, and what can you do?

A: Each person needs to take action. Your actions will influence others and then the change becomes part of our culture; at work, school and at home.

"Be the one at your work to be the topic or change" *Vital Café participant*



CONSUMPTION: WHISTLER, DO WE CONSUME TOO MUCH?

Sustainable consumption and production is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all.
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals #12

Q: What does sustainable consumption mean to you?

A: Buy less. Buy local. Choosing products with less packaging

Q: How has your consumption changed over time in Whistler?

A: Used to live in a larger house, now downsizing. Whistler is a casual town, so I buy less 'town' clothes but my outerwear/sports clothing purchases have risen. I buy less as I've learned about environmental impacts.

Q: What can you do as an individual to consume responsibly?

A: Get out of my car, take the bus. Borrow tools from WCSS's tool lending library, attend a repair café, buy second-hand. Make a budget, make a list and stick to it.

"Influence manufactures and retailers by making a statement with your wallet" *Vital Café participant.*



60% The increase in the size of an average home in North America since 1970

65% The % of garages that cannot fit a car because of all the stuff

\$25B The annual revenues of the US self storage industry
David Van Seters

BELONGING

"A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with changing emotions." *Karyn Hall, PHD Certified Clinician*

ZERO HUNGER: HOW CAN WE FILL WHISTLER'S EMPTY STOMACHS

To be hungry is a short-lived experience where you know that you will get to eat. To experience hunger means that your ability to feed yourself is not secure." *Vital Café participant.*



"[Seed libraries] encourage people to dive deeper, to think and talk about things like food sovereignty, food justice and food sustainability — on a community scale." *Dawn Johnson, Sustainable Community Development and Project Specialist,*



Q: Have you personally experienced hunger?
 A: None of our participants had experienced hunger.

Q: What does hunger look like in Whistler?
 A: It is mostly invisible. Food insecurity is not reflective of income and can lead to feelings of fear and shame as well as social exclusion.

FOOD WAS PICKED UP 2,773 TIMES
 677 TIMES TO KIDS

Q: What can we do as individuals to educate others on hunger in Whistler to make a positive change?
 A: Contribute your time at the food bank, school lunch programs or offer to teach cooking skills. Plant and share the produce from a garden and plan meals to minimize wastage.



The **Whistler Centre for Sustainability** is leading the Squamish-Lillooet Food Project to advance region-wide initiatives that create a more sustainable food system in the region.

FOSTERING BELONGING - WHISTLER, WHOSE JOB IS IT ANYWAY?!

Q: When do you feel like you belong?
 A: I feel like I belong when I have a sense of purpose through friends, colleagues, activities and volunteering.



Where do Whistlerites feel their greatest sense of belonging?

With friends **63%**
 In nature **56%**
 At work/in a group **33%**
 With family **31%**
 VITAL SIGNS REPORT, 2018

When my kids were young, I felt more belonging. As they've grown, I feel less connection with others.



Q: Is Whistler a community that makes you feel like you belong?
 A: Whistler is a hard place to make friends. I often feel 'why bother' as people are only going to move on due to affordability. When you get to your 30s/40s and want to have children there is no stable housing.



Q: How can you as an individual or organization help Whistler become a belonging community?
 A: Create intentional neighbourhoods through block parties and events. Think about 'co-housing' concepts with a small footprint for accommodation but large shared use facility for other activities. Start a mentorship program for supervisors/managers to ensure they can stay as this is often a transition point in their life.



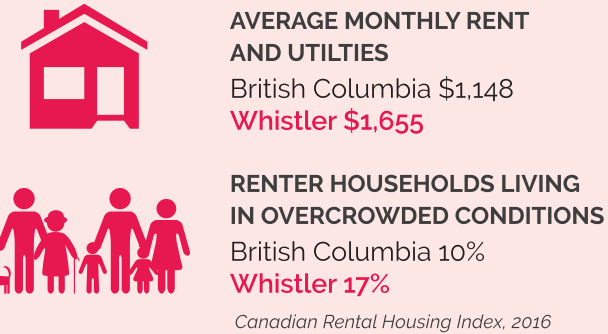
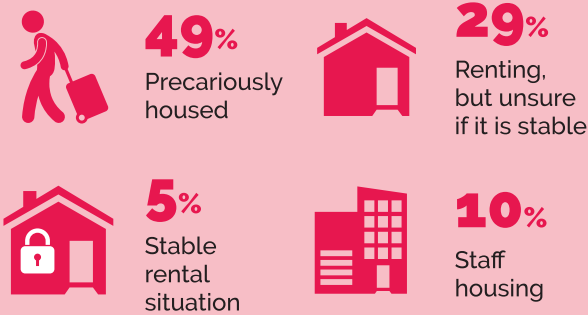
IS THERE POVERTY IN WHISTLER

"Poverty is more than just not having enough money." *Vital Café participant*



Yes, there is poverty in Whistler, but we as individuals and as a collective community have the power to help change that.
 Sara Jennings, Food Bank Coordinator

Housing (Whistler Food Bank 2018 Statistic)



"Our first year was the 2018-2019 school year, and the program ran from mid-December for 25 weeks. In that time we gave out 12,159 snacks and meals to all five of Whistler's schools. We feed about 5% of our school population (1,450 students in Whistler total)." *Cara Burrow, School Lunch Coordinator, WCSS*

Q: What does poverty mean to you?
 A: When someone is injured, they very quickly realize that without a paycheck they need help.
 "Most of our food bank clients only come 1-3 times in a year, a lot are in their 30's-50's but a growing percentage are 65 years and up." *Sara Jennings*

Q: Why is it important that we discuss poverty in Whistler?
 A: We are just like other communities but the disparity between rich and poor is greater.

Many family incomes cannot sustain the cost of living. \$26-hour x 40-hour week, x 2 parents = just meeting the cost of living. Vital Signs 2018 report

Q: How can I help reduce poverty in Whistler?
 A: Advocate to council for policy change in regards to wages and housing.

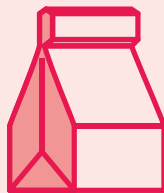
To be a healthy community, we need to look after everyone.



Proportion of renter household income spent on rent plus utilities in Whistler

Household Income	Average Income	Studio	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4-Bed	All Units
\$0 - \$37,462	\$21,571	54%	54%	99%	113%	-	81%
\$37,462 - \$61,043	\$48,282	21%	29%	38%	45%	-	35%
\$61,043 - \$95,854	\$77,751	-	20%	24%	34%	41%	25%
\$95,854 +	\$139,667	-	12%	16%	21%	21%	18%

Canadian Rental Housing Index, 2016



300 TIMES PREPACKED BAGS OF FOOD WERE SERVED OUTSIDE REGULAR FOOD BANK HOURS
 This has doubled from 2017

Whistler Food Bank 2018 Statistic

UNDERSTANDING

"A person of understanding is thoughtful, empathetic, and knowledgeable. Understanding comes from an open, honest attitude and emotional maturity."
Adam Dorsey, Psy.D.

HOW INCLUSIVE IS WHISTLER, REALLY? LET'S GO ALL IN!

"Imagine saying to a visitor, 'welcome, everyone here hikes, and you are welcome to join us.' Imagine on the other hand, saying to the visitor, 'welcome, we would like to include you in our activities. How can we do that together?' The first is being welcoming, the second inclusive. But why is this distinction important?"
Carole Stretch, Whistler Multicultural Network

Q: What does inclusive mean?

A: Being curious, welcoming and respectful of other cultures. To incorporate newcomers' values into the workplace, social settings, school and sports.

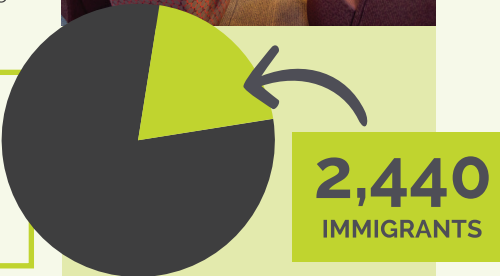
In Whistler, we rely on temporary foreign workers and immigrants to sustain our workforce.



Q: What can we/I do to be more inclusive?

A: Employ people from different cultures in your business and use plain language that is appropriate and non-discriminatory.

"Kids are accepting of newcomers. We need to follow their lead."
Vital Café participant



TOTAL WHISTLER POPULATION = 11,840
2016 CENSUS



Q: How inclusive is Whistler?

A: We have people from other countries whose credentials aren't recognized and as it is difficult to be certified here, opportunities in the workforce are marginalized.



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: WHISTLER, HOW ENGAGED ARE WE

For centuries, shishálh, Swxwú7mesh, Lilwat and Státyemc people marked this vast region with their footprints, language and culture. We are grateful to First Nations people of Swxwú7mesh, Lilwat and shishálh who shared their lived experiences with us in a vital conversation.

Giving territorial acknowledgment provides a moment for reflection but we can do better; mix it up, learn the language and really understand what it means. - *Vital Café participant.*



Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw is a vibrant and dynamic Coast Salish Nation. Currently, they have more than 3,600 members with more than 60% living on Squamish Nation reserve lands. squamish.net

Lilwat Nation is a progressive First Nations community located 7 km north of Pemberton, BC. With a membership of almost 2,200 people, approximately 65% of whom live in the community. lilwat.ca



Q: What does Truth and Reconciliation mean to you? What do you know?

A: It is language and cultural restoration. A need to learn and understand how the true history has led to multigenerational harm. It means acknowledging the past wrongs and moving forward together.

Q: How is Whistler embracing the topic of Truth and Reconciliation? What does it look like?

A: Learning and support programs are provided through the Squamish Lilwat Cultural Centre, Whistler Community Services Society, Zero Ceiling, Arts Whistler, Whistler Museum, Howe Sound Women's Centre, and the Whistler Public Library.

Q: What can you personally do?

A: Listen to stories, seek to understand the truth and banish preconceived ideas. We cannot undo what was done, so now we need to come together to listen, to understand, to move forward together with honor respect.



NO COMMUNITY WITHOUT LEARNING, NO LEARNING WITHOUT COMMUNITY

Learning improves your life
- *Vital café participant*



Q: What does learning mean to you?

A: Self fulfilment, greater job prospects, social outlet, life skills and an opportunity to teach others.



Sustainable Development Goal 4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality childhood development.



"The lack of early childcare places and the need for more early childhood educators, is effecting access to quality care and pre-primary education." *Suki Cheyne, Whistler Learning Centre*

Photo: Whistler Welcome Centre

Q: How does community enhance learning, and learning enhance community?

A: A community's culture and collective knowledge provides positive and valuable learning opportunities. An informed community is a healthy community.

21% of Whistler residents are IMMIGRANTS

(not including temporary foreign workers), and a large percentage need to learn English before they can access technical, vocational and tertiary education and gain skills for employment. *Suki Cheyne - Whistler Learning Centre*

Q: How can we make learning a pillar of community wellbeing?

A: Remove barriers, including time, location, and cost and promote a learning exchange.

Our Vital Podcasts invite you to be part of the conversations whether you were able to join us at the table or not. Each podcast is a focused conversation with our host and a presenter from the Vital Cafés.

Visit our page to connect to the conversation.
whistlerfoundation.com

Whistler is situated on the shared unceded, traditional territory of the Lilwat and Squamish First Nations. The Whistler area was used by both nations as travel and trade route, where families would hunt, fish and gather edible and workable plants.

About the Whistler Community Foundation

Founded in 1999, the Whistler Community Foundation is a charitable public foundation that provides grants to nonprofits in areas of environment, arts and culture, social service and education.

The Whistler Community Foundation:

- offers donors the opportunity to establish endowed funds for the ongoing benefit of the community
- provides grants to local charitable organizations to help them succeed in carrying out their respective missions
- measures the vitality of our community through Whistler's Vital Signs and supports action towards improving collective quality of life

The Whistler Community Foundation is investing in a thriving community where charities have a long term source of stable funding to support their full range of programs and services. As the only local option for creating a permanent personal legacy for your community, we help you to support the causes that you care about the most.

Investing in a thriving community.



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Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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VitalSigns®

Community foundations taking the pulse of Canadian communities.



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20
years of giving
1999-2019