



Climbing the Mountain: Reconciliation in Workplaces

Participant Guidebook, 2021



climbing
the mountain

“Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is just and it also necessary.”

— Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made 94 Calls to Action, and this is No. 92, as it applies to business and reconciliation:

Business and Reconciliation

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

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Acknowledgments

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Message from Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Reconciliation is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed a step at a time. ***Climbing the Mountain: Reconciliation in Workplaces*** enables and empowers leaders in private and public industries to address one of the most important issues of our time, while creating workplaces that can help create a future Canada we can all be proud of. These activities and educational materials embody the Calls to Action I and my fellow commissioners envisioned during the scope of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission — specifically Call to Action #92 — and is an exceptional way to train and retain employees and produce healthy relationships with Indigenous communities, breaking new and important ground, while reminding us that change comes from courage, strength and innovation in this work. I hope all workplaces in Canada enjoy and partake in these innovative, exciting and experiential ideas and initiatives.

Miigwech (thanks) to Indspire and the writing team for such an incredible accomplishment.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Murray Sinclair, LLB, IPC
Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada



About Indspire

Indspire is an Indigenous national registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous peoples for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada.

Our vision is to enrich Canada through Indigenous education by inspiring achievement. In partnership with Indigenous, private and public sector stakeholders, Indspire educates, connects and invests in Indigenous peoples, so they will achieve their highest potential.

Indspire serves First Nations, Inuit and Métis students in remote communities and urban centres across Canada. With the support of our funding partners, we disburse financial awards, deliver programs and share resources with the goal of closing the gap in Indigenous education.

Each year, Indspire awards millions of dollars through scholarships, bursaries, and awards to Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education opportunities across Canada.

Indspire also presents the Indspire Awards, a nationally broadcast celebration of the successes achieved by Indigenous peoples.

Visit our website, indspire.ca, for more information.

Contact us with general inquiries at 1-855-INDSPIRE (1-855-463-7747) or follow us on social media!



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Workshop Objectives

- Address Call to Action No. 92 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Encourage meaningful and purposeful dialogue and decisions regarding truth and reconciliation in workplaces.
- Empower individual, professional and community awareness and workplace sensitivity regarding Indigenous peoples in Canada and competency of traditional Indigenous cultures worldviews, spiritualities and histories.
- Provide pertinent knowledge regarding the contemporary situation of Indigenous peoples in Canada and uncover some “best practices” when incorporating Indigenous peoples and content in workplaces.
- Recognize the impacts of colonization on all Canadians, specifically through the lens of policies such as the residential school system, discriminatory laws and policies, and the banning of culture, language and ceremonies, and the *Indian Act*.
- Work toward respectful and meaningful relationships with both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.
- Inform and promote the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s final report to collectively advocate in the creation of healthy workplaces based in principles of reconciliation.

Notes on This Manual

Talking About Indigenous Issues and Residential Schools

Climbing the Mountain: Reconciliation in Workplaces is not a resource that teaches an exhaustive history of Indigenous issues, nor the history of residential schools. There are many excellent localized, provincial and national curriculums that do this. Still, some basic knowledge regarding residential schools is important in understanding why reconciliation is necessary, so previous instruction on residential schools should be considered important pre-instruction and a foundation to this guide. Some important questions participants may want to discuss beforehand include:

- What were residential schools?
- How long did residential schools exist?
- Why were residential schools created?
- How did residential schools operate?
- What were students' experiences like in residential schools?
- Why do many residential school attendees prefer to be called "Survivors"?
- How did/are residential school Survivors fare/faring as adults?
- How did residential schools affect non-Indigenous peoples in Canada?
- When did the Canadian public learn about residential schools and their legacies?
- How did religious institutions react to the disclosures of Survivors who attended these schools?
- How did the Government of Canada react?
- What was the response of political organizations, such as the Assembly of First Nations?
- What actions have been taken by the federal government since the ending of the schools in the 1990s? The churches? Survivors?
- What is the 2006 Residential School Settlement Agreement and what does it do?

Workplaces are also strongly encouraged to invite researchers, writers and Survivors of residential schools to share with them their experiences, where appropriate (see guidelines in this manual on how to do this appropriately). Participants should also be prepared and supported sufficiently regarding residential school history before proceeding with this workshop. The final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) that accompany this guide should be consulted, since these volumes are the best resources on this topic.

The Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF) is an excellent resource for supporting educational work surrounding residential schools. The LHF is a national, Indigenous-led

charitable organization founded in 2000, with the goal of educating and raising awareness about the history and many legacies of the residential school system. These include the direct and ongoing impacts on First Nation, Métis and Inuit Survivors, their communities and their descendants. Their mission is to educate toward creating just and equal relationships of reconciliation and healing for all Canadians, to expand awareness of and access to the rich legacy of the contributions of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the world and to make known the histories of Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the histories of injustice.

The LHF has many bilingual resources available to educators, students and researchers. They range from a DVD focusing on various aspects of residential schools to a full curriculum package consisting of six complete lesson plans with resources. The LHF specializes in creating curriculums on the history and legacies of the residential school system. Its materials present the general history of the system and also explore the specific experiences of Inuit and Métis students. The LHF also has a full suite of workshop guides, providing culturally infused activities relating to aspects of the residential school system and in-service training to educators, as well as facilitating workshops for schools and other organizations. Educators can visit its website, <http://legacyofhope.ca>, for more information.

Teaching about residential schools can be very challenging. Participants from all walks of life may have strong emotional reactions or triggers from specific topics. These could be from Survivors, family members or any Canadian person — young or old. Those educating about residential schools and for reconciliation must be prepared for these situations and help those around them deal with the complex feelings that may emerge.

Health Canada states that discussions surrounding residential schools can result in revisiting painful memories and/or lead to difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours. These could occur many weeks after discussions. Health Canada describes these as four different symptoms:

- **Spiritual** - Wondering about your spiritual/religious beliefs and/or values, doubting the goodness and kindness of people, not feeling in touch with yourself.
- **Behavioural** - Flashbacks, agitation, appetite changes, addictions, quick to anger, isolating self, mood swings, shock, conflict in relationships, lack of concentration.
- **Physical** - Trouble sleeping, nightmares, stomach ache, nausea, general body aches, headaches, crying, panic attacks.
- **Emotional** - Sadness, anger, frustration, feeling alone, mistrust of others, feelings of guilt, shame, blame, fear, hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed.

These feelings may lead to health issues and must be taken very seriously. In specific circumstances, educators may wish to consult with or refer those around them to the following organizations for confidential support:

- **National Indian Residential School Crisis Line** — whose mandate is to support residential school Survivors and their families (but it has a policy “not to turn anyone away”): 1-866-925-4419.
- **Kids Help Phone** — an anonymous and confidential phone and online professional counselling service for youth: 1-800-668-6868.

If symptoms continue to persist, further counselling, cultural supports and/or health care may be needed.

This manual is based in values of respect, recognition and responsibility. While time is limited to deliver all of this content, this manual is intended to supplement the information provided in the workshop, while facilitating a safe atmosphere in an open and non-judgmental environment. In every case, participants are encouraged to discuss their feelings and beliefs, while also hearing those of others. Participants may encounter historical issues, ideas and opinions reflective of the complicated relationship that Indigenous peoples and Canada share. This may involve some conflict and agreement or disagreement at any time.

Participants are therefore advised that they should be prepared for situations where complex feelings may emerge. Health practitioners recommend a great deal of “self-care” when discussing complicated feelings and issues. They suggest the following to engage feelings surrounding sensitive topics:

- Be patient and kind to yourself
- Take walks and exercise
- Spend time on the land
- Debrief with family and friends
- When needed: laugh, cry, talk, smudge, pray, sing, sew, drum, dance, relax
- Meditate, sleep, get plenty of rest
- Seek spiritual or religious support
- Eat healthy foods
- Ask for help when needed or seek counselling.

While ***Climbing the Mountain*** is not a guide about all issues surrounding reconciliation, discussions surrounding Indigenous cultures and communities, and legacies in Canada may spark any feelings and reactions, and all participants should be prepared for this possibility. **In particular, it is crucial that health supports be available and people knowledgeable about residential schools and their legacies be consulted and included in planning. These may include counsellors, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers or health practitioners in a community.**

Inviting Indigenous Elders and Residential School Survivors to Speak

At times, participants may consider inviting Indigenous Elders and residential school Survivors to share their stories and experiences. These can provide an opportunity to hear first-hand about their lives, while creating relationships and giving context to issues, facilitating understanding and connection. Among the approximately 80,000 Survivors still alive, this can be a rich experience, but it must be done with care and concern for all involved. A reminder, too, that each Indigenous community has its own cultural protocols and procedures, and these should be investigated before contacting any elders.

The Legacy of Hope Foundation has some excellent general guidelines to use when inviting Indigenous Elders and residential school Survivors to speak. These are:

- Where will the presentation/discussion be held?
- Is the location accessible?
- Will special travel or mobility arrangements be necessary?
- Keep in mind that most Survivors are seniors and may have special needs. Does the speaker have any health issues you need to be aware of?
- Are they diabetic?
- Will they require drinks and snacks?
- Do they have any dietary restrictions?
- Many Survivors prefer to travel with a companion for mobility or health support. Let Survivors know they can bring someone with them.

In addition, here are some further guidelines to consider:

Find out what cultural protocols should be followed. It may be customary in your area to make an offering to a Survivor prior to the event. Usually, tobacco or tea is presented. An honorarium should also be provided. Ask your local Native Friendship Centre or Indigenous cultural centre what amount is appropriate.

Discuss with the Elder what experiences he or she would like to share. Ensure that it is age appropriate, and that the participants are prepared ahead of time should difficult topics come up. Some Survivors suffered extreme abuses, and, while it is important for participants to fully understand the impact of those experiences, care should be taken not to put them at risk for vicarious trauma.

Prepare Elders for the type of presentation/discussion you are planning. Will it be part of a larger event? How many participants will attend? Will counsellors or health-support workers be present? Smaller groups work best (no more than 35

participants). Be aware that you are asking Survivors to share personal and often difficult experiences. Ensure that the setting is comfortable and non-intimidating.

Prepare the audience. Audiences should have some rudimentary knowledge of the history and legacy of the residential school system in Canada before a Survivor is brought in to speak. Let participants know that the information they will hear may be difficult. Most importantly, ensure that Survivors are treated with respect by your community. In some cases, Survivors are also Elders, holders of Indigenous cultural and spiritual knowledge who perform and practise cultural ceremonies and traditions. They may offer to perform a smudging ceremony or to say a prayer.

Take the Elder's emotional needs into consideration. He or she may become upset or emotional during the presentation/discussion. Arrange for a quiet space, where they can take a break and call the 24-hour National Indian Residential School Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419 for emotional support, if desired.

Residential school Survivors, in particular, should be treated with respect. Remember that they were children when they experienced the trauma of residential school, some from as young as four or five years of age. They were brave children and are now, as Survivors, honouring you with their stories. With some planning and preparation, bringing a Survivor into the workplace can be a transformative experience for your participants and can greatly advance their understanding and perception of residential schools and of Aboriginal peoples living with this legacy.

Accompanying Resources

Participants have been provided with the following resources that support this guide:

Summaries of the Final Report

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

The Survivors Speak

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

The TRC's Final Reports

Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1: Origins to 1939

Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000

Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience

Canada's Residential Schools: The Métis Experience

Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials

Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy

Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation

These resources can also be accessed directly online via the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at <https://nctr.ca/reports2.php>.

Workshop Schedule: Four-Hour Version

The schedule for the four-hour workshop (240 minutes) is as follows:

1. Greetings and Orientation	(10 mins)	0:00–0:10
2. A Brief History of Indigenous Peoples and Canada	(35 mins)	0:10–0:45
3. Residential Schools, the TRC and Reconciliation	(45 mins)	0:45–1:30
4. Turn and Talk: Reflections on Reconciliation	(20 mins)	1:30–1:50
5. Break	(10 mins)	1:50–2:00
6. What Does Reconciliation Look Like?	(15 mins)	2:00–2:15
7. Committing to Reconciliation	(45 mins)	2:15–3:00
8. Creating a Workplace for Reconciliation	(45 mins)	3:00–3:45
9. Wrap-up, Evaluation, Final Questions	(15 mins)	3:45–4:00

Optional: Two-Hour Version

The schedule for a two-hour version of this workshop (120 minutes) is as follows:

1. Greetings and Course Orientation	(3–5 mins)
2. A Brief History of Indigenous Peoples and Canada	(20 mins)
3. Residential Schools, the TRC and Reconciliation	(25 mins)
4. Turn and Talk: Reflections on Reconciliation	(10 mins)
5. Break	(10 mins)
6. What Does Reconciliation Look Like?	(10 mins)
7. Committing to Reconciliation	(20 mins)
8. Creating a Workplace for Reconciliation	(20 mins)
9. Wrap-up, Evaluation, Final Questions	(3–5 mins)

Climbing the Mountain: An Introduction



Canada is in an age of reconciliation. No issue is more important in this country than engaging the unbalanced and unhealthy relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. After 150 years of legislative and systemic oppression, physical and ideological violence — and imposed cycles of inequity leading to poverty and marginalization — most want, indeed, need, a country more than what we have inherited.

This conversation on reconciliation has been inspired by an awakening to the most divisive policy in Canadian history: the residential school system. The residential school system was part of a program to remove, control and ultimately assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canadian society and culture. Administered by the *Indian Act*, Indigenous peoples were forced off the land, placed under draconian laws and had their children removed and placed in schools, operated by churches and overseen by the federal government. These were most often unsafe, unhealthy and unsuitable institutions that facilitated atmospheres of violence, abuse and sickness. Attendees were separated from their families for long periods of time, not allowed to speak their languages and practise their cultures, and they were taught that their ancestors were heathens and uncivilized. Their education was usually poor, consisting mostly of manual labour and religious indoctrination. While there may have been some well intentions with those involved in creating the system, residential schools attempted to “kill the Indian in the child.”

At the same time as residential schools were in operation, Canadian students were taught that Indigenous cultures and communities were savage and inferior, and that Canadians carried the “burden” of “civilizing” Indigenous societies. They were also taught that Canadians were culturally and intellectually superior to Indigenous peoples. These beliefs were embedded in the curriculum and everyday life of Canadian schools and were embodied in mainstream cultural practices and policies. This legitimated destructive and divisive governmental policies surrounding Indians, with the worst being the residential school system itself; the “final solution” to the assimilating Indigenous peoples into the country. These ideas led to generations of Canadians rife with ignorance and stereotypes surrounding Indigenous peoples and the construction of unbalanced relationships throughout all sectors of Canadian society. While in recent years this has begun to change, the legacies of these educational systems continue to impact Indigenous-Canadian relationships in workplaces, homes and institutions — dividing communities along racial and cultural lines.

All of Canada has been, and continues to be, affected by the educational systems Indigenous and Canadian students have experienced.

It is now time to reconcile these legacies.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada spent seven years examining the history and impacts of the residential school system and what could be done about it. In June 2015, the TRC presented its final report, alongside 94 Calls to Action to “redress

the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.”

The TRC’s report was wide ranging and impactful. As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau remarked at the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Assembly of First Nations:

Last month, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its summary report and findings. Some of us here today were last together at Rideau Hall, at the ceremony to mark the end of the Commission’s seven years of hard work helping our country understand the truth about that dark chapter of our history. It’s an event I will never forget. It was an experience that will remain with me — not just in my heart, but in my actions as we move forward, together.

That day, I heard stories that touched me and other caring Canadians very deeply. Stories I will tell to my own children in time, because it’s important that they know that the things we believe about ourselves as Canadians — that we’re generous, that we treat others with respect and fairness — those things have not always been true. I’ll tell them about the Survivors I met that day. To the Survivors here today: know that your stories will be shared. I’ll tell them why there were two empty chairs in that room.

As any parent or teacher can tell you, the sense of social justice often beats strongest in young hearts. I know that my children — and your children — will want to know what we’re collectively going to do about it. How we can find our way to reconciliation, now that the truth is starting to be known.

This is an especially important conversation to have as we prepare to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Confederation. We need to recognize that ours was a nation forged without the meaningful participation of Aboriginal Peoples. That this unlikely country has endured for a century and a half is cause for celebration. But at the same time, this commemoration stands as a reminder that much work remains. One hundred fifty years on, we’ve yet to complete the unfinished business of Confederation.

Completing the “unfinished business of Confederation” means recognizing, rectifying and reconciling the relationship Canada holds with Indigenous peoples. This is an unfinished — and, as Trudeau states, a barely begun — journey.

All Canadians must know, understand and engage our collective history and how they are a part of it. Workplaces are a crucial step in this journey. As the TRC states:

Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools,

and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

This manual and its accompanying workshop provide an opportunity for healthy and positive relationships to occur. It facilitates a space in which awareness of Indigenous histories, relationships with Indigenous cultures and communities, and learning how to engage and integrate Indigenous values and partnerships can occur.

The reasons for including Indigenous peoples and perspectives in workplaces are simple. Not only does this embody reconciliation, but it also engages the reality of today's Canada. Indigenous peoples across Canada are entering workplaces at a higher rate than any other group. Indigenous professionals are becoming leaders throughout the private and public sphere and represent Canada's largest resource going into the future. At the same time, Indigenous economies represent some of the most important and foundational economies of Canada's future. Workplaces therefore must become culturally competent and inclusive, as well as a dynamic environment that can help build Canada's future.

This path is not easy — we have more than 150 years behind us. It will take many more years to engage, understand and heal from this experience and grow together. At times, this journey will feel difficult, challenging and much like Justice Sinclair describes: a path up a mountain. There will be no destination, just an ongoing process of building and rebuilding relationships. Reconciliation is a forever journey requiring constant focus, energy and commitment to responsibility and collectivity. These steps will not be easy, but nothing great really ever is. If we do this just and necessary work, however, we will make a Canada of which we can all be proud.

A Brief History of Indigenous Peoples and Canada



Indigenous Foundations

For millennia, Indigenous communities in lands now known as Canada developed their own cultures, languages, customs, governmental systems and intellectual traditions. In this place, Indigenous nations carried thousands of linguistic dialects spread over 50 unique languages with different community customs, practices and traditions that emerged in distinct political and social circumstances.

While impossible to encompass all Indigenous cultures into one description, most Indigenous nations generally have Creation Stories articulating who they are, how they got to the place they are, how they relate to others and why they are here. Most describe a Creator who created them a set of gifts, tasking them with sharing their gifts to create relationships within an active and vibrant Creation. One of the most sacred relationships humans carry is with the Earth, often called “Mother Earth.” Considering her a caregiver and parent, Mother Earth facilitates everything humans need to live. Indigenous communities therefore cared for, looked after and protected Mother Earth, as she looked after them, with love, honour, care and respect. This is a central reason why Indigenous communities feel so dedicated to protecting and honouring the land.

While storytelling, song and ceremony (what’s universally known as oral traditions) were — and still are — practised in all communities, writing was also practised universally through mediums such as birchbark, papyrus, animal hide, rock and trees. These expressions relayed messages, recorded stories and histories, and created critical experiences, mapping a community’s ties with human and non-human beings (such as animals, plants, stars, the moon, the sun and the spirit world). Much of these relationships are embedded in the names Indigenous peoples gave to places, which describe not just what a place is, but also what happens there. For instance, the name “winnipeg” means “clouded water” and refers to not just the algae in Lake Winnipeg, but also to the ecology in which algae is produced.

Every Indigenous community used a name to describe themselves, such as “Haudenosaunee” (used by people often referred to as Onondaga, Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora) or “Anishinaabe” (Ojibway, Saulteaux, Chippewa, Odawa, Potawatomi and Mississauga). These often translate into English as “the people” and/or people who carry a certain role, practice or responsibility (Anishinaabe: the “spontaneous people”, “good human” or Haudenosaunee: “people of the longhouse”). These are the names these communities still use to describe themselves today and should be utilized by anyone interacting with that community. Within names are often many sets of related nations, such as the multiple nations that exist within the “Cree” family (Swampy Cree, Rock Cree, Plains Cree, etc.).

Life developed in this way for thousands of years — and was by no means perfect, as wars, conflicts and sickness happened — but communities forged peace through trade,

shared values of mutual and reciprocal responsibility and treaties. Borders between communities changed and shifted over time and were at times shared and mobile. Communities amalgamated, and new nations emerged. Then, a great deal of this changed when Europeans arrived and began to settle in North America.

Struggles Over the Land

According to many historians, European settlement in Canada began on the East Coast with the Vikings more than 1,000 years ago and, later, by Basque sailors along the coast of Labrador in the 1500s. Virtually, wherever Europeans settled a struggle ensued over territories inhabited by Indigenous peoples. Settlers and governments were often eager to immigrate and set up their own communities, extract resources and impose their laws and values onto others. Many times, they did not share the view Indigenous peoples held that land, water and animals were sacred. Instead, Europeans predominantly viewed land and resources as things to be bought and sold for profit — with little thought for long-term consequences.

Indigenous peoples attempted to mitigate this by introducing the concept of treaty to Europeans, such as the “Kaswentha” (pronounced “Gus-wén-ta”), a treaty belt created in the 17th century to record an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Dutch settlers in eastern New York. Also known as the “Two-Row Wampum,” it consists of alternating rows of purple and white wampum running the length of a belt, representing two boats travelling down a river with two separate paths, never meeting but always sharing the water between them. The treaty also represents peace, friendship and an eternal connection between two communities and the “circle of life”: the animals, the birds, the fish, the water, the plants, the grass, the trees, the stars, the moon and the thunder — all living together in an atmosphere of sharing and respect.

Europeans, however, had other goals than relationships with Indigenous nations. Explorers carried “papal bulls” or solemn declarations from the Vatican, which stated that any lands Christians “discovered” and were “not under the dominion of any Christian rulers” could be claimed outright. This became known as the “Doctrine of Discovery,” a legal concept used to claim “*terra nullius*” or “unoccupied” lands — even if Indigenous peoples were already there. This began a process in which Indigenous peoples were deemed inferior, uncivilized and dispossessed from their territories, giving Europeans rights to claim whatever lands on which they set foot.

At the same time, Indigenous nations were creating close ties — and treaties — with European settlers. This resulted in the incorporation of European religions, technologies, weapons and foods into Indigenous lives. As much as Europeans influenced Indigenous communities, though, Europeans were influenced, too, adopting Indigenous values and ideas into their languages, politics and perspectives. European settlers, for example, noticed how the Great Law of Peace among the Haudenosaunee led to effective and fair

government (what would later become democracy), or how many Indigenous communities used their “warriors” to institute and maintain peace (what would later become “peacekeepers”). The vast knowledge Indigenous communities had about science, astronomy and ecology deeply affected European technologies, medicines and philosophies.

Not all trade was positive, however. In particular, European settlement was beginning to have disastrous effects on Indigenous populations. Interruptions to trade and food routes, wars and industrialization decimated many communities, leading to starvation and struggle. This led to a rapid increase in disease (particularly, smallpox and tuberculosis) and a death rate as high as 90 per cent. In addition, the introduction of alcohol, guns and notions of private property deeply undermined and challenged Indigenous cultural and legal institutions, health and economies.

Some treaties resulted in the British and Indigenous nations forming partnerships necessary to the formation of Canada, such as during the 1764 Treaty of Niagara, which proved essential in providing Indigenous support during the War of 1812 with the United States. Most treaties in the eyes of the British, however, were “land cessions” and purchases — even if Indigenous peoples did not see them as so. Indigenous nations for the most part saw treaties as land-sharing agreements and, when relocating to reserve lands, believed their way of life would continue uninterrupted. Indigenous lives and ways of life were interrupted, however, and with the massive population loss due to food shortages, trauma and disease, Indigenous nations began to be characterized by Canadian leaders as “disappearing.” Indigenous peoples were also a “problem” when they insisted on the honouring of treaties and that they were partners of the Crown, not subjects.

In 1867, the *British North America Act* formed Canada, confirming the claims of King George III and legally entrenching that Canada had control over “Indians and land reserved for Indians” (Section 91.24). With the need for more lands and resources for a coast-to-coast train line, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald set out to aggressively “settle” the Prairies with the “numbered treaties.” From 1871–1921, the Crown negotiated 11 treaties that created the Canada of today. In return for access to huge swaths of land, these agreements promised First Nations “rights” like a school, support for agriculture development, food and medicines for disease and annual gifts. First Nations also had to agree to move to reserves, recognize federal authorities (like police) and respect Canadian law.

In 1876 the *Indian Act* was passed. The *Indian Act* dictated who could and could not be an Indian (removing those with not enough Indian “blood” from having “status,” like the Métis) and placed Indians under the jurisdiction of the minister of Indian Affairs. The minister’s proxy on reserves was an Indian Agent, who was given power to control almost every aspect of Indigenous lives. Over the years, the *Indian Act* was amended to ban ceremonies, forbid Indigenous peoples from hiring lawyers and outlawed parents from making decisions regarding their children (giving ultimate parental rights to the minister). Since Indigenous peoples were not citizens, they could not vote in Canadian elections, own property and — without permission of the Indian Agent — leave the reserve.

The *Indian Act* also contained a clause called “enfranchisement,” a “voluntary” act where Indigenous peoples could renounce their status, leave reserves and move to towns and cities as a Canadian citizen. This left Indigenous peoples with no choice; in order to go to school, become a doctor or enlist in the army, vote or drink alcohol, they would have to enfranchise. This meant leaving their communities, giving up any rights under treaty and entering a world that viewed Indigenous peoples as savages, disappearing and problems to be solved.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada documents, the *Indian Act* was intended to erase Indigenous peoples altogether:

Without legal authority or foundation, in the 1880s, Canada instituted a “pass system” that was intended to confine First Nations people to their reserves. Canada replaced existing forms of Aboriginal government with relatively powerless band councils whose decisions it could override and whose leaders it could depose. In the process, it disempowered Aboriginal women, who had held significant influence and powerful roles in many First Nations, including the Haudenosaunee, the Carrier, and Tlingit.

Canada denied the right to participate fully in Canadian political, economic, and social life to those Aboriginal people who refused to abandon their Aboriginal identity.

Canada outlawed Aboriginal spiritual practices, jailed Aboriginal spiritual leaders, and confiscated sacred objects . . .

These measures were part of a coherent policy to eliminate Aboriginal people as distinct peoples and to assimilate them into the Canadian mainstream against their will. Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott outlined the goals of that policy in 1920, when he told a parliamentary committee that “our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic.” These goals were reiterated in 1969 in the federal government’s Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy” (more often referred to as the “White Paper”), which sought to end Indian status and terminate the treaties that the federal government had negotiated with First Nations.

The Canadian government pursued this policy of cultural genocide because it wished to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources. If every Aboriginal person had been “absorbed into the body politic,” there would be no reserves, no Treaties, and no Aboriginal rights. (*Summary of the Final Report*, pp. 1–3.)

The most aggressive “policy of cultural genocide” was the residential school system.



Image source: <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/histories/mohawk-institute>

The Residential School System

For more than a century, beginning in the mid-1800s until the 1990s, Indigenous children in Canada — as young as four years of age — were removed from their homes and placed in residential schools. Operated by churches and overseen by the federal government, these schools — while sometimes well-meaning — were designed to assimilate Indigenous children into Canadian mainstream society. The curriculum of residential schools was intended to indoctrinate Indigenous children into Euro-centric, Christian and Canadian values, while also teaching them that their cultures, communities and families were deficient and uncivilized. The purpose of the residential school system, therefore, was to “kill the Indian in the child,” while shepherding Indigenous children into “civilization.”

While some Canadian churches had been operating boarding schools since the 16th century, the majority of residential schools began in the 1870s, as missionaries established them across the Prairies, in the North and in British Columbia. Funded by the federal government, most residential schools were operated by Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist and Presbyterian officials, who viewed them as an opportunity to introduce Christianity quickly and effectively. In addition, there were day schools (where students went home at night) and industrial schools, with some Métis

and non-status Indigenous students attending, too. In the North, the residential school system did not begin full operation until the 1950s.

Residential schools were designed to break the link Indigenous children held with their families, communities and cultures — and the identities these provided. This is why residential schools were placed so far away from Indigenous communities, separating children from these influences. Justifying the Canadian government's residential school policy in 1883, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald told the House of Commons:

When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with its parents, who are savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly impressed upon myself, as head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.

Residential schools continued for generations. In the late 1960s, political movements began in Indigenous communities to take back control of the education of their children. By the 1980s, most residential schools had closed or had been taken over by Indigenous communities, with the last in operation until 1996.

The majority of the 150,000 students attending residential schools experienced neglect, suffering and dangerous situations. Most were separated from their families for long periods of time, not allowed to speak their languages or practice their culture and were taught that their communities were uncivilized. Many attendees experienced sexual, mental and physical abuse on a daily basis, leading to legacies of shame and fear. Some reported positive experiences, particularly when participating in sports and music programs, but the level of education was substandard and inadequate. In 1930, for instance, only three out of 100 Aboriginal students managed to advance past Grade 6.

As the TRC documents, residential schools were often rampant with death due to unsanitary conditions, poorly qualified staff and regular occurrences of disease, hunger and overcrowding. As the TRC states:

For children, life in these schools was lonely and alien. Buildings were poorly located, poorly built, and poorly maintained. The staff was limited in numbers, often poorly trained, and not adequately supervised. Many schools were poorly heated and poorly ventilated, and the diet was meagre and of poor quality. Discipline was harsh, and daily life was highly regimented. Aboriginal languages and cultures were denigrated and suppressed. The educational goals of the schools were limited and confused, and usually reflected a low regard for the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal people. For the students, education and technical training too often gave way to the drudgery of doing the chores

necessary to make the schools self-sustaining. Child neglect was institutionalized, and the lack of supervision created situations where students were prey to sexual and physical abusers. (*Summary of the Final Report*, pp. 3–4.)

These conditions were noted by government officials as early as 1897. In 1907, the chief medical officer for Canada's Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs, Dr. P. H. Bryce, reported a death toll among the students ranging from 15 per cent to 24 per cent and rising to 42 per cent in Indigenous homes, where sick children were sometimes sent to die. In most cases, attendees did not just attend the schools, but "survived" them. It is for this reason many who attended prefer the term "Survivor" to describe the experience they endured.

Every part of residential school was intended to impose a sense of shame on students surrounding themselves. Even after finishing school, many residential school Survivors suffered with feelings of abandonment, confusion and mistrust for years, and even unknowingly and unwillingly they introduced some of these legacies to their families and communities. In some Indigenous homes, feelings of anger and fear, cycles of abuse and violence, and processes leading to poverty and suicide emerged and spread through generations. The impacts of residential schools not only influenced Survivors of the schools, but also their children, their children's children and all communities in which they took part. The legacies of residential schools on Indigenous communities cannot be understated.

At the same time, everyone else who came in contact with the schools was also affected. Canadians who were employed at, lived nearby or interacted with the schools as policemen, Indian Agents or social workers reported trauma either from what they witnessed or from the realization of what they were a part of with these schools. Contractors who removed children heard echoes of cries. Employers who worked with students grew frustrated at what they perceived as a lack of education.

For generations, residential schools have affected Indigenous families, communities and nations. As University of British Columbia (UBC) researcher Erin Hanson describes:

The residential school system is viewed by much of the Canadian public as part of a distant past, disassociated from today's events. In many ways, this is a misconception. The last residential school did not close its doors until 1996. Many of the leaders, teachers, parents, and grandparents of today's Aboriginal communities are residential school Survivors. There is, in addition, an intergenerational effect: many descendants of residential school Survivors share the same burdens as their ancestors even if they did not attend the schools themselves. These include transmitted personal trauma and compromised family systems, as well as the loss in Aboriginal communities of language, culture, and the teaching of tradition from one generation to another.

According to the Manitoba Justice Institute, residential schools laid the foundation for the epidemic we see today of domestic abuse and violence against Aboriginal women and children.¹⁷ Generations of children have grown up without a nurturing family life. As adults, many of them lack adequate parenting skills and, having only experienced abuse, in turn abuse their children and family members. The high incidence of domestic violence among Aboriginal families results in many broken homes, perpetuating the cycle of abuse and dysfunction over generations.

Many observers have argued that the sense of worthlessness that was instilled in students by the residential school system contributed to extremely low self-esteem. This has manifested itself in self-abuse, resulting in high rates of alcoholism, substance abuse and suicide. Among First Nations peoples between 10 and 44 years of age, suicide and self-inflicted injury are the No. 1 causes of death, responsible for almost 40 per cent of mortalities.¹⁸ First Nations women attempt suicide eight times more often than other Canadian women, and First Nations men attempt suicide five times more often than other Canadian men.¹⁹ Some communities experience what have been called “suicide epidemics.”

Many Aboriginal children have grown up feeling that they do not belong in “either world”: they are neither truly Aboriginal, nor part of the dominant society. They struggle to fit in, but face discrimination from both societies, which makes it difficult to obtain education and skills. The result is poverty for many Aboriginal people. In addition, the residential schools and other negative experiences with state-sponsored education have fostered mistrust of education in general, making it difficult for Aboriginal communities and individuals to break the cycle of poverty.

In addition, generations of Canadians were ignorant as to what was happening in their own society or, worse, were told that what was happening was necessary. In schools, young Canadians were taught that “Indians” were savage and inferior, and that society carried the “burden” of “civilizing” Indigenous societies. They were also taught that Canadians were culturally and intellectually superior to “Indians” and therefore were supposed to fix the “problem.” Found in the curriculum of Canadian schools and embodied in mainstream cultural practices and policies, this message led to generations of Canadians rife with ignorance and stereotypes, and unbalanced relationships throughout all sectors of Canadian society. While in recent years things have begun to change, unbalanced relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians continue to be found in workplaces, homes and educational institutions — dividing the country along racial and cultural lines.

Resistance and the Rise of the TRC

In the 1980s, residential school Survivors began to take the government and churches to court, suing them for damages resulting from their residential school experiences. In 1990, Phil Fontaine (then-Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs) called for the churches and the government to acknowledge the physical, emotional and sexual abuse endured by students at residential schools. He also bravely disclosed his own abuse, creating public awareness on the issue. In 1991, the federal government convened a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), and its final report in 1996 recommended a public inquiry into residential schools.

Meanwhile, public pressure was emerging. In 1993, the Anglican Church publicly apologized for its role in the residential school system. This was followed by apologies by the Presbyterian Church in 1994 and the United Church in 1998. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI met with Fontaine and “expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity.”

Suddenly, a unified group of 86,000 Survivors of Indian residential schools joined with the Assembly of First Nations to launch a class-action court case against the federal government and the four churches that ran most of them. In 2006, the parties successfully negotiated the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history. The agreement involved:

- The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC);
- A base payment to all surviving former students of federally administered residential schools, and further compensation for those who suffered physical and sexual abuse;
- Healing initiatives; and
- A fund for commemoration projects.

On June 11, 2008, all the major political parties in Canada met in the House of Commons to publicly apologize for the government’s involvement in the residential school system and to acknowledge the widespread impact of the schools on Indigenous peoples. On this day, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated:

Two primary objectives of the residential school system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, “to kill the Indian in the child.” Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

This apology affected Canadians and Indigenous peoples in a variety of ways. As UBC researcher Erin Hanson comments and reflects on the apology, she says:

The federal government's apology was met with a range of responses. Some people felt that it marked a new era of positive federal government–Aboriginal relations based on mutual respect, while others felt that the apology was merely symbolic and doubted that it would change the government's relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

Although the apologies and acknowledgements made by governments and churches are important steps forward in the healing process, Aboriginal leaders have said that such gestures are not enough without supportive action. Communities and residential school survivor societies are undertaking healing initiatives, both traditional and non-traditional, and providing opportunities for Survivors to talk about their experiences and move forward to heal and to create a positive future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Many hoped that this “supportive action” would be in the work of the TRC.

The TRC was established to document the history and legacy of residential schools, inform Canadians about their findings and establish a national research centre to continue the work beyond the commission. The commissioners were Justice Murray Sinclair (Chair), Chief Wilton Littlechild and Marie Wilson. Over six years, the TRC gathered statements from residential school Survivors, their families and others affected by residential schools. It also facilitated research projects, public education initiatives and commemoration projects and held national and local events, including hundreds of thousands of Survivors, their families and Canadians.

On June 2, 2015, the TRC issued a summary of its final report, concluding that the residential school system amounted to “cultural genocide,” with legacies from the schools found in every part of Canadian society. As the report states:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.”

Physical genocide is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and biological genocide is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow

the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. (*Summary of the Final Report*, pp. 1–2.)

To engage this history and its legacies, 94 Calls to Action were recommended. They are wide-ranging and addressed to governments, churches and various sectors of Canadian society. Specifically, the TRC identified the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as “the framework for reconciliation” in Canada and asked for its implementation immediately. The TRC also mandated the creation of a national research centre, which began at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in 2015.

Into Reconciliation

Today, while Indigenous peoples are the fastest-growing demographic in the country they are also one of the most underemployed populations. This is in large part due to a long history in Canada of excluding Indigenous peoples from the social, economic, political and educational systems of the country and systematically ensuring this marginalization endures.

Indigenous peoples are Canada’s fastest-growing resource. The 2016 census shows that the Indigenous population has grown by 42.5 per cent since 2006 — more than four times the growth rate of the non-Indigenous population. The average age of the Indigenous population was 32.1 years in 2016, almost a decade younger than the non-Indigenous population. Between 2006 and 2016, the Indigenous working-age population increased by about 35 per cent (compared to seven per cent for Canada), while the Indigenous labour force grew by 22 per cent (compared to five per cent for the entire country). Most young, employable Indigenous populations live in urban areas on the Prairies, such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary and Saskatoon.

At the same time — and due to myriad historical and political factors — some of the highest unemployment rates exist in Indigenous communities. The unemployment rate for the Indigenous workforce is two times higher than that of the non-Indigenous workforce (15 per cent versus 7.5 per cent), and they have less access to well-paying jobs, a lack of work experience and inadequate education or training. Many challenges face potential Indigenous employees entering workplaces, including:

- A lack of resources, education or interest to create workplaces of reconciliation

- Adequate training for all employees on the history and relationships with Indigenous communities
- Misperceptions and stereotypes that create conflictual work environments, while limiting access and opportunities, and excluding Indigenous people from employment
- A lack of human resource policies to introduce Indigenous employees to the workplace, assist in career planning and provide culturally sensitive training programs, policies and practices.

Still, more Indigenous workers are entering the workforce than ever. For instance, according to a recent TD Bank study, Indigenous women are “leading the way in labour markets,” with an upswing in employment. Growth in employment has been particularly high in knowledge-based sectors such as finance, education and professional services (due to rapid increases in educational attainment). In 2012, about 40 per cent of off-reserve Indigenous workers were employed in education, law, business and finance, management and health sectors. Universities such as the University of Manitoba and University of Saskatchewan now have Indigenous student enrolments as high as 10 per cent of their entire institution. In other words, Canada’s Indigenous labour force is becoming more educated and more urban and is overcoming gaps in education.

This is contributing to Canada’s other most untapped resource: Indigenous communities. Over the past few years, there has been a radical increase in Indigenous businesses and business owners. The current gross domestic product (GDP) of Indigenous markets in Canada is \$32 billion — more than the combined GDPs of Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. A 2019 report in Manitoba, for instance, suggested that First Nations in that province inject \$9.3 billion annually into the Manitoba economy (around 15 per cent of its total), even with existing economic and educational barriers. Now, imagine the potential if those barriers were removed, and reconciliation becomes a reality.

Indigenous peoples are beginning to access incredible spending power. For instance, if the public and private sectors in Canada were just to implement the TRC’s Calls to Action and employ Indigenous workers at the same rate it employs Canadians, then 210,000 Indigenous jobs would be created. As these Indigenous employees attain education levels and employment levels Canadians enjoy, Canada’s GDP would increase by \$401 billion by 2026. Unlike some multinational corporations and populations, Indigenous peoples almost exclusively make direct investments that help build the Canadian economy. In fact, even if existing economic and educational barriers remain the same until 2026, the contributions of Indigenous communities to the Canadian economy are still expected to increase by a factor of four.

The Indigenous business world is expansive, with more Indigenous business owners than ever before. Today, there are more than 250 Indigenous community development corporations designed to spur economic growth and partner with companies to engage

Indigenous communities. There is also a rapid increase of Indigenous presence in urban areas with a rise of urban reserves and Indigenous-owned businesses. These, in many cases, have saved the economic life of towns, neighbourhoods and city spaces.

According to a 2015 study by the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business, the top areas of Indigenous business owners are in the following industries:

- Professional, scientific and technical services in education, health and social industries (34 per cent)
- Construction (19 per cent)
- Manufacturing, transportation, warehousing (nine per cent)
- Wholesale, retail (nine per cent)
- Arts, entertainment, accommodation, food and cultural, tourism (nine per cent).

In that same study, almost half (44 per cent) of First Nations entrepreneurs have established their businesses in cities, a number that has increased substantially since 2010.

This has all resulted in significant changes in Canada. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of pride in Indigenous communities and extensive pressure on the federal government to recognize the inherent right of Indigenous peoples to have autonomy over their own affairs. Some success has been found in certain forms of “self-government,” such as in the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the establishment of Nunavut Territory in 1999, giving Inuit a degree of control in the North. None of these successes have come without previous court battles, though, as Canadian law and politicians are slow to change. The most significant change to date is the inclusion of Section 35 in Canada’s 1982 constitution, which “recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights.” While Indigenous nations and Canada continue to have disputes over what “Aboriginal and treaty rights” are — resulting in regular trips to the Supreme Court — there is increasing pressure on Canada by Indigenous leaders to appropriately share resources, adequately consult on the use of Indigenous territories and recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous nations and governments.

Also, it cannot be denied that there is a deep divide among Indigenous communities about the federal government’s political commitments to reconciliation, use of lands and resources, and the country’s agenda when it comes to energy and the environment. This most recently occurred during the Idle No More movement, one of the largest political actions regarding the protection of land and water in the modern era. This has resulted in demonstrations in malls, traffic slowdowns and a demand for accountability and change in the unhealthy, unequal and unbalanced relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Meanwhile, a body of Canadian allies has begun to form and ask for similar change. This has brought us to a space where all Canadians are engaged at some level in conversations on reconciliation — a possibility never before achieved in this country’s history.

The reality is that as the Indigenous workforce increases, and Indigenous businesses take their place in this country's economy, Canadians will live and work alongside Indigenous peoples more than ever before. If they are not prepared for this reality, conflict will ensue, and Canada's productivity will decrease. Businesses can do their part and create an atmosphere of reconciliation that will embody the future, while contributing to the collective growth of the country. Creating a healthy workplace that includes Indigenous faces is one part of how the public and private industry can embody reconciliation in their work.

A Brief Chronology of Indigenous Peoples and Canada

For millennia

First Nations communities maintain that the Creator placed them as sovereign nations and caretakers of the lands, air and waters on Turtle Island — sacred responsibilities that continue to the present day.

Before contact with Europeans

First Nations communities develop their own systems of government on their own recognized lands and territories. The cultural cornerstones of most of these communities centre on respect, sharing and maintaining harmony and balance in the cycle of life.

1492–1700s

Indigenous communities and Europeans meet for the first time. In some cases, explorers marry into families and are adopted by Indigenous communities. In other cases, struggles over land and resources ensue.

1763

A Royal Proclamation, decreed by King George III, recognizes First Nations as “nations” and acknowledges that they have some title over lands and territories. The proclamation declares that only the Crown could negotiate the sharing of lands and resources with First Nations peoples, and consent is required. Agreements must be based on a recognition of the need for sharing and peaceful co-existence.

1812

The War of 1812 saw thousands of Indigenous peoples fight to protect their lands, independence and culture, while allied to either Great Britain or the United States. In British North America, an alliance between the British and the Western Confederacy, led by Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa, played a crucial role protecting Upper and Lower Canada from American invasion. By the end of hostilities, between 7,000 and 10,000 Indigenous peoples had died. The terms of the Treaty of Ghent — which were supposed to return lands and “all possessions, rights and privileges” to Indigenous peoples affected by the war — went unheeded.

1821

The North West Company merges with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), giving the HBC the exclusive right to trade with First Nations throughout the "uninhabited areas of North America" (sic).

1857

The *Gradual Civilization Act* was passed by the United Province of Canada to encourage assimilation of Indigenous peoples to Euro-Canadian values. Those Indigenous men over age 21 deemed "sufficiently advanced" in their education would be enfranchised and given 50 acres of land, but would also be removed of their Treaty Rights.

1867

The *British North America Act* is adopted, giving the federal government "responsibility for First Nations and lands reserved for First Nations" (Section 91.24).

1867

Canada buys Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company for \$300,000 — without informing the existing inhabitants.

1868–70

The Red River Resistance saw the Métis, led by Louis Riel, and First Nations allies forcefully defend the Red River Colony from the federal government's attempt to transfer Rupert's Land to Canada without consultation. Fearing an influx of settlers and trying to safeguard their land rights and distinct culture, the Métis established a Provisional Government to co-ordinate the resistance and, later, negotiate Manitoba's entry into Confederation with the federal government.

1871

Treaties 1 and 2 are negotiated and signed with Anishinaabeg leaders at Lower Fort Garry. The terms included allowing immigrants to use First Nations lands and territories; setting aside land for First Nations exclusive use; sharing resources; making annual treaty payments (now \$5); providing for education, housing and medical assistance; providing food aid in case of famine; giving grants for clothing; and making annual payments for ammunition and rope, as well as other provisions. Nine more "numbered" treaties are signed between 1873 and 1921.

1876

The *Indian Act* is passed by Canadian Parliament. Provisions in the act include the restriction of movement off reserve, banning of religious ceremonies and public meetings, stringent controls over Indian "status," mandatory school attendance (and jail for parents if they resisted) and punishment for any Canadian who helps First Nations

resist the provisions of the act. Subsequent amendments to the act from 1880–1927 further restricted their rights and freedoms. Changes included banning hereditary chiefdoms and other forms of governance; expropriating reserve lands for public purposes; requiring permission to be allowed off reserve; prohibiting the Potlatch and Sun Dances; requiring attendance at residential school; revoking Indian status when enfranchised; and prohibiting First Nations from hiring lawyers or initiating land claims in the courts.

1880s

With populations devastated by overhunting and urban development, the bison almost totally disappears from the Prairies.

1883

Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald authorizes the creation of residential schools, designed to assimilate Indigenous children and force their adoption of Euro-Canadian languages, foods, religions and habits.

1885

The Northwest Resistance occurs, a five-month resistance by the Métis and their First Nations allies against the federal government in the Northwest (now Saskatchewan and Alberta). In the face of anxiety about white settlers and government encroachment into their lands, the Métis formed a second provisional government in the region, again led by Louis Riel. The Métis Bill of Rights demanded improved treatment for all residents of the Northwest, including land rights, political representation and better education. After resisting the Canadian military, the movement ends with Riel's hanging for treason, the imprisonment of Cree chiefs Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear) and Pitikwahanapiwiyin (Poundmaker) and the imposition of Canadian law in the West.

1892

The federal government begins making arrangements with the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian (later, United) churches for the establishment of Indian residential schools.

1914–18

About 3,500 Indigenous people serve in the Canadian military during the First World War. Most were denied veterans' benefits after the war.

1922

The Story of a National Crime is published by Dr. P.H. Bryce, chief medical officer for Canada's Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs. He argued that Indigenous people's health was being ignored in residential schools and Indian hospitals, in

violation of treaty pledges.

1939–45

Thousands of First Nations and Métis soldiers and nurses serve during the Second World War.

1951

The *Indian Act* is amended to remove the ban on traditional ceremonies and to allow First Nations people to legally enter drinking establishments.

1960

Through changes to the *Canada Elections Act*, status Indians receive the right to vote in federal elections, no longer losing Indian status or Treaty Rights in the process.

1960s

The Sixties Scoop saw thousands of Indigenous children taken from their families and communities by provincial and federal social workers and placed in foster or adoption homes, often with non-Indigenous families. The process was emotionally damaging for parents and contributed to a loss of cultural identity for the children.

1969

Jean Chrétien, minister of Indian Affairs, releases the Liberal government's "White Paper," which proposes repealing the *Indian Act*, removing special status for First Nations people and abolishing all treaties, transferring responsibility for Indian affairs to the provinces. In response, Cree Chief Harold Cardinal wrote the "Red Paper," which called for recognition of Indigenous peoples as "Citizens Plus".

1973

In the landmark Calder Case in British Columbia, the Supreme Court ruled that Indigenous peoples held title to land before European colonization and that this title existed in law. Named for Nisga'a Chief Frank Calder, the case forced the government to concede that they must adopt new policies to negotiate land claims with Indigenous peoples not covered by treaties.

1974

The Native Women's Association of Canada is established to advocate for the social, political and economic welfare of Indigenous women and girls. They continue to promote education, challenge discriminatory policies and work to reduce inequality.

1980–81

The Constitution Express takes place, a grassroots movement where activists travelled

from Vancouver to Ottawa by train, raising awareness about the lack of recognition of Indigenous rights in the proposed Canadian constitution.

1982

The first constitutional conference on First Nations autonomy is held. It proposes the following four additions to the Canadian constitution:

- recognition of rights acquired under agreements to settle land claims;
- a guarantee of equal recognition for men and women of rights arising from the treaties;
- an undertaking to consult the First Nations on any future constitutional amendment relating to them; and
- an undertaking to hold three additional conferences.

The Canadian constitution is patriated, and thanks to the advocacy of Indigenous peoples, Section 35 was included to specifically recognize and affirm Indigenous title and Treaty Rights. Later, Section 37 was amended, obligating the federal and provincial governments to consult with Indigenous peoples on any outstanding issues.

1982

The Assembly of First Nations is formed out of the National Indian Brotherhood to promote the interests of First Nations in the realm of self-government, respect for Treaty Rights, education, health, and land and resources.

1985

The *Indian Act* is amended to end discrimination against First Nations women and allow for the recovery of status by certain First Nations women. The federal government also includes clauses to limit the extension of status to future generations (6.1 and 6.2).

1990

Elijah Harper (Red Sucker Lake Anishinaabe-Cree), a Manitoba member of legislative assembly, helps defeat the Meech Lake Accord, which stated that Quebec is “a distinct society within Canada,” but did not adequately address First Nations concerns. Harper is later elected to the House of Commons in Ottawa.

1990

The “Oka Crisis,” a 78-day standoff over land between the Haudenosaunee of Kanesatake and the Canadian state near Oka, Quebec, captures the world’s attention.

1991

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) is established by the federal government with the mandate to work toward proposing practical solutions to restore

the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

1992

Phil Fontaine, BA (Sagkeeng Anishinaabe), Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, first speaks publicly about how the residential school system caused many Indigenous peoples to suffer physical and sexual abuse.

1992

The General Assembly of the United Nations declares 1995–2004 to be the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

1996

The final report of the RCAP is tabled in Canada's Parliament. It makes 440 recommendations, calling for sweeping changes to the relationship among Aboriginal peoples, non-Aboriginal peoples and the governments in Canada. These recommendations include the recognition of an Aboriginal order of government, including an Aboriginal parliament that has authority over matters related to Indigenous peoples and their territories. It also calls for recognition of land rights and hunting rights, as well as control over their own social, education, health and housing programs.

1996

National Aboriginal Day (June 21) is established by the Governor General of Canada to celebrate Indigenous cultures and their contributions to Canadian society.

1998

Jane Stewart, minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, delivers a written apology for years of neglect and widespread abuse of students at federally funded residential schools to the Assembly of First Nations. The government also set a fund of \$350 million "for community-based healing".

1999

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is established on September 1 as the first national Aboriginal television network in the world, with the APTN's programming by, for and about Aboriginal people, to share with all Canadians. This represents a significant milestone for Aboriginal Canada: for the first time in broadcast history, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have the opportunity to share their stories with all of Canada through a national television network dedicated to Aboriginal programming.

2005

The Kelowna Accord was forged between federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous leaders on health, education, social and economic improvements for Indigenous

peoples. While \$5 billion was allocated, there was no formal agreement on how the money would be dispensed, and it was never implemented.

2008

In response to a class-action lawsuit by Survivors, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issues a statement of apology to former students of residential schools in Canada for the harm caused by assimilationist goals, abuse and cultural loss.

2008

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is officially established as a response to the charges of abuse and other negative effects on First Nations children that resulted from the residential school system. Judge Murray Sinclair (Peguis Anishinaabe) is eventually appointed chair of the TRC.

2009

Survivors launch a class-action lawsuit regarding the forced attendance of Indigenous students at Indian day schools and seek compensation for damages and exclusion from the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

2012

Idle No More starts as a national (and online) movement of marches and teach-ins, raising awareness of Indigenous rights and advocacy for self-determination.

2012

Sagkeeng's Finest, an Indigenous dance troupe blending Métis jigging with contemporary dance, wins the nationally televised talent show *Canada's Got Talent* (winning \$100,000 and a car).

2014

The RCMP reports that more than 1,186 Indigenous women have been murdered or gone missing between 1980 and 2012. Activists and allies, including those from the Native Women's Association of Canada, claim the number is more than 4,000.

2015

The Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report is issued, documenting the experiences of approximately 150,000 residential school students and Survivors. The 94 Calls to Action are issued to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation". As part of this, a National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation "dedicated to preserving the truth about residential schools and advancing reconciliation" is located at the University of Manitoba.

2015

In the Canadian federal election, Indigenous peoples participate as never before, directly influencing 51 ridings and electing an unprecedented 10 Indigenous MPs.

2016

The Supreme Court rules in the *Daniels vs. Canada* decision that Métis and non-status First Nations fall under the authority of Section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act*, meaning that these groups now are recognized as the responsibility of the federal government and hold similar rights as First Nations and Inuit, including negotiating for land rights.

2016

A National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is launched in response to calls for action from Indigenous families, communities and organizations. In forthcoming years, many families will express concern for the inquiry's work and its lack of support for families and hearings.

2016

Canada officially signs on to the 2007 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which recognizes Indigenous people's rights to self-determination, cultural practices, land and security.

2016

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal finds Canada to be racially discriminating against 165,000 First Nations children in the child-welfare system and orders that policies to create equity be enacted immediately.

2017

Canada reaches a settlement agreement with Survivors of the Sixties Scoop class-action lawsuit regarding their loss of culture, language and identity. The agreement does not cover claims for "abuse while in care," but will pay individuals from a fund of approximately \$800 million.

2018

The federal government announces an agreement-in-principle with former students of Indian day schools. The agreement includes funds for legal fees, \$200 million for healing, wellness, language, culture and commemoration, and compensation for individual attendees.

2019

The United Nations declares 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages.



2019

The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is released and it comes to the “inescapable conclusion” that Canada’s treatment of Indigenous peoples amounts to “genocide.” It details what it finds to be the root causes of the violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls, and recommends 231 Calls for Justice to address them, spanning every segment of Canadian society.

2019

British Columbia becomes the first jurisdiction in Canada to pass legislation implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). The legislation is designed to ensure that all B.C. laws are consistent with the 46 articles of UNDRIP.

2019

The federal government passes the *Indigenous Languages Act*, a law that sets up an Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, tasked at protecting, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages.

2019

The federal government passes new legislation that affirms the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services.

2020

A worldwide pandemic emerges with the COVID-19 virus. While Indigenous communities are more susceptible to the spread of the virus due to a lack of access to health care, poor infrastructure, housing overcrowding and already-compromised immune systems due to poverty, most communities express their sovereignty with roadblocks and border patrols, protecting themselves and others in the process.

Turn and Talk: Our History

With a partner, answer the following four questions:

1. What is your personal and family history that brought you to Canada? What stories and sources have you drawn on for this information? Was your family or were your ancestors affected by any of the history just discussed? How?
2. What has been your experience with Indigenous peoples? Have you had the opportunity to learn about Indigenous culture and history? Do you have any personal or professional relationships with Indigenous peoples or communities? If so, which ones?
3. Look at “A Brief Chronology of Indigenous Peoples and Canada” (on the preceding pages in this manual). Which events did you already know? Are there any events that surprised you, or ones that you would like to know more about? If so, which ones?
4. In what specific ways are the events in “A Brief Chronology of Indigenous Peoples and Canada” and/or any other events in Indigenous history evident in your community? Do you see any solutions for rectifying this history? If so, how could your workplace participate?

Reconciliation





As per the online *Oxford Dictionary*:

reconciliation (rekən silē'āSHən), *noun*

1. The restoration of friendly relations.
2. The action of creating agreement, compromise, understanding, peace.
3. Harmonizing, harmonization, squaring, balancing.

What Is Reconciliation?

During the course of the TRC's work, it has become clear that the concept of reconciliation means different things to different people, communities, institutions and organizations.

— *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*

Defining reconciliation is a very difficult — and almost impossible — task. The TRC defines reconciliation in its final report as “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships” (*Summary of the Final Report*, p. 16).

Reconciliation is different for every person, just as harm and reparations are always based on the individuals and communities involved. This challenge, while daunting, is also one of the strongest features of reconciliation.

One thing that is clear is that it will take the participation of peoples from all walks of life for reconciliation to be possible. Reconciliation requires people from all communities, all genders, all sexualities and all political views to be enacted. Reconciliation also takes time, patience and commitment. It involves committing to relationships in their broadest form and doing the hard work necessary to communicate and collaborate, co-operate and compromise with integrity and understanding. Reconciliation requires respect and empathy. Reconciliation may also involve reparations and restitution. Most of all, reconciliation involves a willingness from all sides to acknowledge that a harm has occurred, and everyone will work together to rectify this wrong and continue the relationship.

Reconciliation begins with communication. The TRC commissioners articulate reconciliation further by saying that:

A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process.

Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders have long dealt with conflicts and harms using spiritual ceremonies and peacemaking practices, and by retelling oral history stories that reveal how their ancestors restored harmony to families and communities. These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation across this land.

As First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities access and revitalize their spirituality, cultures, languages, laws, and governance systems, and as non-Aboriginal Canadians increasingly come to understand Indigenous history within Canada, and to recognize and respect Indigenous approaches to establishing and maintaining respectful relationships, Canadians can work together to forge a new covenant of reconciliation.

Despite the ravages of colonialism, every Indigenous nation across the country, each with its own distinctive culture and language, has kept its legal traditions and peacemaking practices alive in its communities. While Elders and Knowledge Keepers across the land have told us that there is no specific word for “reconciliation” in their own languages, there are many words, stories, and songs, as well as sacred objects such as wampum belts, peace pipes, eagle down, cedar boughs, drums, and regalia, that are used to establish relationships, repair conflicts, restore harmony, and make peace. The ceremonies and protocols of Indigenous law are still remembered and practised in many Aboriginal communities. (*Summary of the Final Report*, pp. 16–17.)

But communication is only the first part of reconciliation. The TRC commissioners point out that as Canadians acknowledge the harms of the past and learn the Indigenous traditions that make up Canada’s foundation, Canadians must also “do more than just *talk* about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships”. This is deeply personal work, while at the same time work that must be pursued in all aspects of Canadian society from private to public industry, from living room to boardroom, and from church to synagogue to temple to mosque to lodge to longhouse.

In its report entitled *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, the TRC suggests that 10 principles form a foundation for reconciliation and will allow “Canada to flourish in the twenty-first century.” These **Principles of Truth and Reconciliation** are:

1. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice and economic opportunities and prosperity.
5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society. (*What We Have Learned*, pp. 1–4.)

These 10 principles, if instituted, would enact reconciliation in the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and change the foundation of the country — the laws, the beliefs and the stories. Reconciliation, according to the TRC, looks like this:

For many Survivors and their families, this commitment is foremost about healing themselves, their communities, and nations, in ways that revitalize individuals as well as Indigenous cultures, languages, spirituality, laws, and governance systems. For governments, building a respectful relationship involves dismantling a centuries-old political and bureaucratic culture in which, all too often, policies and programs are still based on failed notions of assimilation. For churches, demonstrating long-term commitment requires atoning for actions within the residential schools, respecting Indigenous spirituality, and supporting Indigenous peoples' struggles for justice and equity. Schools must teach history in ways that foster mutual respect, empathy, and engagement. All Canadian children and youth deserve to know Canada's honest history, including what happened in the residential schools, and to appreciate the rich history and knowledge of Indigenous nations who continue to make such a strong contribution to Canada, including our very name and collective identity as a country. For Canadians from all walks of life, reconciliation offers a new way of living together. (*Summary of the Final Report*, p. 21.)

This is a beautiful — and remarkable — vision, and one not yet seen in Canada’s history.

The TRC 94 Calls to Action

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made the following Calls to Action in 2015:

LEGACY

Child Welfare

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by: Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.
 - i. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.
 - ii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
 - iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
 - iv. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.
3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan’s Principle.
4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:
 - i. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
 - ii. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
 - iii. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.

5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

Education

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:
 - i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
 - ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
 - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
 - iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
 - v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
 - vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
 - vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

Language and Culture

13. We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.
14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
 - ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
 - iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.
 - iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
 - v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.
15. We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-languages initiatives.
16. We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
17. We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

Health

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
20. In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.
21. We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental,

- emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.
22. We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.
 23. We call upon all levels of government to:
 - i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.
 - ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
 - iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.
 24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Justice

25. We call upon the federal government to establish a written policy that reaffirms the independence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to investigate crimes in which the government has its own interest as a potential or real party in civil litigation.
26. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to review and amend their respective statutes of limitations to ensure that they conform to the principle that governments and other entities cannot rely on limitation defenses to defend legal actions of historical abuse brought by Aboriginal people.
27. We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
28. We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
29. We call upon the parties and, in particular, the federal government, to work collaboratively with plaintiffs not included in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to have disputed legal issues determined expeditiously

- on an agreed set of facts.
30. We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.
 31. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.
 32. We call upon the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to allow trial judges, upon giving reasons, to depart from mandatory minimum sentences and restrictions on the use of conditional sentences.
 33. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize as a high priority the need to address and prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and to develop, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.
 34. We call upon the governments of Canada, the provinces, and territories to undertake reforms to the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), including:
 - i. Providing increased community resources and powers for courts to ensure that FASD is properly diagnosed, and that appropriate community supports are in place for those with FASD. Enacting statutory exemptions from mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment for offenders affected by FASD.
 - ii. Providing community, correctional, and parole resources to maximize the ability of people with FASD to live in the community.
 - iii. Adopting appropriate evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of such programs and ensure community safety.
 35. We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system.
 36. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work with Aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence, and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused.
 37. We call upon the federal government to provide more supports for Aboriginal programming in halfway houses and parole services.
 38. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade.
 39. We call upon the federal government to develop a national plan to collect and publish data on the criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization.
 40. We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

41. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry's mandate would include:
- i. Investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.
 - ii. Links to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.
42. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems in a manner consistent with the Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, endorsed by Canada in November 2012.

RECONCILIATION

Canadian Governments, un-declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.
44. We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Royal Proclamation and Covenant of Reconciliation

45. We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:
- i. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius.
 - ii. Adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.
 - iii. Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.
 - iv. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indigenous laws and legal traditions in negotiation and implementation processes involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements.

46. We call upon the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to develop and sign a Covenant of Reconciliation that would identify principles for working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in Canadian society, and that would include, but not be limited to:
- i. Reaffirmation of the parties' commitment to reconciliation.
 - ii. Repudiation of concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and the reformation of laws, governance structures, and policies within their respective institutions that continue to rely on such concepts.
 - iii. Full adoption and implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.
 - iv. Support for the renewal or establishment of Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.
 - v. Enabling those excluded from the Settlement Agreement to sign onto the Covenant of Reconciliation.
 - vi. Enabling additional parties to sign onto the Covenant of Reconciliation.
47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

Settlement Agreement Parties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a frame-work for reconciliation. This would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:
- i. Ensuring that their institutions, policies, programs, and practices comply with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
 - ii. Respecting Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent with Article 12:1 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
 - iii. Engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
 - iv. Issuing a statement no later than March 31, 2016, from all religious denominations and faith groups, as to how they will implement the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

49. We call upon all religious denominations and faith groups who have not already done so to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*.

Equity for Aboriginal People in the Legal System

50. In keeping with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
51. We call upon the Government of Canada, as an obligation of its fiduciary responsibility, to develop a policy of transparency by publishing legal opinions it develops and upon which it acts or intends to act, in regard to the scope and extent of Aboriginal and Treaty rights.
52. We call upon the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the courts to adopt the following legal principles:
- i. Aboriginal title claims are accepted once the Aboriginal claimant has established occupation over a particular territory at a particular point in time.
 - ii. Once Aboriginal title has been established, the burden of proving any limitation on any rights arising from the existence of that title shifts to the party asserting such a limitation.

National Council for Reconciliation

53. We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations, and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following:
- i. Monitor, evaluate, and report annually to Parliament and the people of Canada on the Government of Canada's post-apology progress on reconciliation to ensure that government accountability for reconciling the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown is maintained in the coming years.
 - ii. Monitor, evaluate, and report to Parliament and the people of Canada on reconciliation progress across all levels and sectors of Canadian society, including the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

- iii. Develop and implement a multi-year National Action Plan for Reconciliation, which includes research and policy development, public education programs, and resources.
 - iv. Promote public dialogue, public-private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation.
54. We call upon the Government of Canada to provide multi-year funding for the National Council for Reconciliation to ensure that it has the financial, human, and technical resources required to conduct its work, including the endowment of a National Reconciliation Trust to advance the cause of reconciliation.
55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to:
- i. The number of Aboriginal children—including Métis and Inuit children—in care compared with non-Aboriginal children, the reasons for apprehension, and the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies.
 - ii. Comparative funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves.
 - iii. The educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
 - iv. Progress on closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators, such as infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
 - v. Progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in youth custody over the next decade.
 - vi. Progress on reducing the rate of criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization and other crimes.
 - vii. Progress on reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice and correctional systems.
56. We call upon the prime minister of Canada to formally respond to the report of the National Council for Reconciliation by issuing an annual "State of Aboriginal Peoples" report, which would outline the government's plans for advancing the cause of reconciliation.

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal

rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Church Apologies and Reconciliation

58. We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this final report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.
59. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.
60. We call upon leaders of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement and all other faiths, in collaboration with Indigenous spiritual leaders, Survivors, schools of theology, seminaries, and other religious training centres, to develop and teach curriculum for all student clergy, and all clergy and staff who work in Aboriginal communities, on the need to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.
61. We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement, in collaboration with Survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for
 - i. Community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects.
 - ii. Community-controlled culture- and language-revitalization projects.
 - iii. Community-controlled education and relationship-building projects.
 - iv. Regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation.

Education for Reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
 - i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.

- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
 - iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
 - iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:
- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
 - ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
 - iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
 - iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.
64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.
65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

Youth Programs

66. We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

Museums and Archives

67. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and to make recommendations.
68. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and the Canadian Museums Association to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 by establishing a dedicated national funding program for commemoration projects on the theme of reconciliation.

69. We call upon Library and Archives Canada to:
- i. Fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the United Nations Joint-Orientlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.
 - ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public.
 - iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.
70. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices to:
- i. Determine the level of compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the United Nations Joint-Orientlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.
 - ii. Produce a report with recommendations for full implementation of these international mechanisms as a reconciliation framework for Canadian archives.

Missing Children and Burial Information

71. We call upon all chief coroners and provincial vital statistics agencies that have not provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada their records on the deaths of Aboriginal children in the care of residential school authorities to make these documents available to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
72. We call upon the federal government to allocate sufficient resources to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to allow it to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register established by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.
74. We call upon the federal government to work with the churches and Aboriginal community leaders to inform the families of children who died at residential schools of the child's burial location, and to respond to families' wishes for appropriate commemoration ceremonies and markers, and reburial in home communities where requested.
75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential

school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

76. We call upon the parties engaged in the work of documenting, maintaining, commemorating, and protecting residential school cemeteries to adopt strategies in accordance with the following principles:
- i. The Aboriginal community most affected shall lead the development of such strategies.
 - ii. Information shall be sought from residential school Survivors and other Knowledge Keepers in the development of such strategies.
 - iii. Aboriginal protocols shall be respected before any potentially invasive technical inspection and investigation of a cemetery site.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
78. We call upon the Government of Canada to commit to making a funding contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, plus an additional amount to assist communities to research and produce histories of their own Indian residential school experience and their involvement in truth, healing, and reconciliation.

Commemoration

79. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:
- i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
 - ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
 - iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to

Canada's history.

80. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.
81. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.
82. We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.
83. We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

Media and Reconciliation

84. We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada's national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Increasing Aboriginal programming, including Aboriginal-language speakers.
 - ii. Increasing equitable access for Aboriginal peoples to jobs, leadership positions, and professional development opportunities within the organization.
 - iii. Continuing to provide dedicated news coverage and online public information resources on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians, including the history and legacy of residential schools and the reconciliation process.
85. We call upon the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, as an independent non-profit broadcaster with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal peoples, to support reconciliation, including but not limited to:
 - i. Continuing to provide leadership in programming and organizational culture that reflects the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.
 - ii. Continuing to develop media initiatives that inform and educate the Canadian public, and connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

86. We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.

Sports and Reconciliation

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
89. We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.
90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
 - i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
 - ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
 - iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
 - iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs.
91. We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.

Business and Reconciliation

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful

relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.

- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Newcomers to Canada

93. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.
94. We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following:

I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In September 2007, 143 states in the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), a document that describes both individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. UNDRIP commits states to 46 articles based on principles of equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect surrounding relationships with Indigenous peoples. Among many, these include how to engage issues surrounding culture, land, identity, religion, language, health and education. At the time of its passing, Canada joined with the United States, New Zealand and Australia in voting against the declaration, stating concerns regarding provisions dealing with Indigenous lands, territories and resources; definitions regarding “free, prior and informed consent” by Indigenous communities; Indigenous forms of self-government; intellectual property; military issues; and a balance between the rights and obligations of Indigenous peoples, states and third parties. In November 2010, the Government of Canada issued a “statement of support” for the principles of the UNDRIP stating that, “Although the Declaration is a non-legally binding document that does not reflect customary international law nor change Canadian laws, our endorsement gives us the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to continue working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples in creating a better Canada.”

In November 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the Government of Canada had committed to implement UNDRIP and directed his ministers, via mandate letters, to do so. In May 2016, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett announced that Canada is now a “full supporter, without qualification,” of the declaration, stating: “This announcement confirms Canada’s commitment to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples — a relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. Canada will engage with Indigenous groups on how to implement the principles of the declaration. This engagement will include provinces and territories whose co-operation and support is essential to this work and to advancing the vital work of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada.”

The full text of UNDRIP is as follows:

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on September 13, 2007.

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United

Nations, and good faith in the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by States in accordance with the Charter,

affirming that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such,

affirming also that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind,

affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust,

reaffirming that indigenous peoples, in the exercise of their rights, should be free from discrimination of any kind,

concerned that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests,

recognizing the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources,

recognizing also the urgent need to respect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with States,

welcoming the fact that indigenous peoples are organizing themselves for political, economic, social and cultural enhancement and in order to bring to an end all forms of discrimination and oppression wherever they occur,

convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs,

recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment,

emphasizing the contribution of the demilitarization of the lands and territories of indigenous peoples to peace, economic and social progress and development, understanding and friendly relations among nations and peoples of the world,

recognizing in particular the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child,

considering that the rights affirmed in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous peoples are, in some situations, matters of international concern, interest, responsibility and character,

considering also that treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, and the relationship they represent, are the basis for a strengthened partnership between indigenous peoples and States,

acknowledging that the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, affirm the fundamental importance of the right to self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

bearing in mind that nothing in this Declaration may be used to deny any peoples their right to self-determination, exercised in conformity with international law,

convinced that the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in this Declaration will enhance harmonious and cooperative relations between the State and indigenous peoples, based on principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and good faith,

encouraging States to comply with and effectively implement all their obligations as they apply to indigenous peoples under international instruments, in particular those related to human rights, in consultation and cooperation with the peoples concerned,

emphasizing that the United Nations has an important and continuing role to play in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples,

believing that this Declaration is a further important step forward for the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples and in the development of relevant activities of the United Nations system in this field,

recognizing and reaffirming that indigenous individuals are entitled without discrimination to all human rights recognized in international law, and that indigenous peoples possess collective rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development as peoples,

recognizing that the situation of indigenous peoples varies from region to region and from country to country and that^[1]_{USEP} the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical and cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration,

solemnly proclaims the following *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a standard of achievement to be pursued in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect:

Article 1

Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴ and international human rights law.

Article 2

Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

Article 3

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

Article 5

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct

political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

Article 6

Every indigenous individual has the right to a nationality.

Article 7

1. Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person. [L]
[SEP]
2. Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group. [L]
[SEP]

Article 8

1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. [L]
[SEP]
2. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for: [L]
[SEP]
 - a. Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities; [L]
[SEP]
 - b. Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;
 - c. Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights; [L]
[SEP]
 - d. Any form of forced assimilation or integration; [L]
[SEP]
 - e. Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them. [L]
[SEP]

Article 9

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong [L]
[SEP] to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

Article 10

Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.

Article 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right^[L]_[SEP] to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.^[L]_[SEP]

Article 12

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
2. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.^[L]_[SEP]
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.^[L]_[SEP]

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.^[L]_[SEP]
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.^[L]_[SEP]
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access,

when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Article 15

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

Article 16

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.

Article 17

1. Indigenous individuals and peoples have the right to enjoy fully all rights established under applicable international and domestic labour law.
2. States shall in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples take specific measures to protect indigenous children from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, taking into account their special vulnerability and the importance of education for their empowerment.
3. Indigenous individuals have the right not to be subjected to any discriminatory conditions of labour and, inter alia, employment or salary.

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous

peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 20

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress.

Article 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security. [L]
[SEP]
2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities. [L]
[SEP]

Article 22

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. [L]
[SEP]

Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Article 24

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all

social and health services.

2. Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right. [SEP]

Article 25

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 26

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 27

States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, [SEP] to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.

Article 28

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.
2. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress. [SEP]

Article 29

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.
3. States shall also take effective measures to ensure, as needed, that programmes for monitoring, maintaining and restoring the health of indigenous peoples, as developed and implemented by the peoples affected by such materials, are duly implemented. ^[L]_[SEP]

Article 30

1. Military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples, unless justified by a relevant public interest or otherwise freely agreed with or requested by the indigenous peoples concerned.
2. States shall undertake effective consultations with the indigenous peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, prior to using their lands or territories for military activities.

Article 31

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations^[L]_[SEP] of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.
2. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.

Article 32

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources. ^[L]_[SEP]
2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous

peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. [L] [SEP]

3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact. [L] [SEP]

Article 33

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs [L] [SEP] and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live. [L] [SEP]
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures. [L] [SEP]

Article 34

Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Article 35

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the responsibilities of individuals to their communities.

Article 36

1. Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.
2. States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to facilitate the exercise and ensure the implementation of this right. [L] [SEP]

Article 37

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements. [L] [SEP]
2. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as diminishing or eliminating the rights of indigenous peoples contained in treaties,

agreements and other constructive arrangements.

Article 38

States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration.

Article 39

Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

Article 40

Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall give due consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned and international human rights.

Article 41

The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to^[L]_{SEP} the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

Article 42

The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at^[L]_{SEP} the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.

Article 43

The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Article 44

All the rights and freedoms recognized herein are equally guaranteed to male and female indigenous individuals.

Article 45

Nothing in this Declaration may be construed as diminishing or

extinguishing the rights indigenous peoples have now or may acquire in the future.

Article 46

- i. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.
- ii. In the exercise of the rights enunciated in the present Declaration, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all shall be respected. The exercise of the rights set forth in this Declaration shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law and in accordance with international human rights obligations. Any such limitations shall be non-discriminatory and strictly necessary solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights^[SEP] and freedoms of others and for meeting the just and most compelling requirements of a democratic society.
- iii. The provisions set forth in this Declaration shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith.

Committing Your Workplace to Reconciliation



Climbing the Mountain

The release of the 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report has called to action Canadians from every sector of society. The need to provide private and public sectors with information and interpretation of the report is of fundamental importance in order to achieve reconciliation in Canada. Dialogue and decisions on this crucial issue are key to achieving this goal.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada put forward 94 recommendations to address the continuing legacy of the residential school system, improve the plight of Indigenous peoples and restore relations between Indigenous people and other Canadians. These, the report recommends, would put Canada on "a path of reconciliation" and include all public and private sectors across the country.

TRC Call to Action 92 specifically states:

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.

This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.

Committing to Reconciliation

There are many historical and common barriers for Indigenous employees to enter the workforce. These are:

- Education
- Poverty, poor housing and underfunded resources
- Confidence
- Workplace supports
- Workplace needs
- Misunderstandings
- Racism and discrimination.

To confront these, workplaces across Canada are developing relationships with Indigenous communities that recognize historical circumstances and honour the communities and traditional territories within which their projects and operations are located. This is part of an acknowledgment that, in today's Canada, recognizing relationships with Indigenous people are a critical part of Canada's future. Workplaces must therefore be committed to building healthy relationships with Indigenous communities, hiring and retaining workforces that reflect the communities within which they work and participating fully in building a strong future for Canada.

At the same time, committing to reconciliation produces ethical, smart business practices. Speaking to Canada's business community, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Perry Bellegarde stated: "Before you try to build anything, build a respectful relationship." Considering Canada's changing business climate, committing to reconciliation will help influence institutions in the private and public sector perform more effectively, encourage new economic opportunities, create partnerships to diversify service delivery and build relationships necessary for the future. It is therefore crucial that all workplaces become familiar with ways to produce healthy and positive relationships with Indigenous communities. Here are a few tips and techniques which can set this stage:

Working with Indigenous Peoples and Communities

What term do I use?

Use "Indigenous." This is a collective name for the original people of North America and their descendants. While the Canadian constitution (the *Constitution Act, 1982*) recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples (Indians, Métis and Inuit), these are peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Every Indigenous community used a name to describe themselves, such as "Haudenosaunee"

(used by people often referred to as Onondaga, Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca and Tuscarora) or “Anishinaabe” (Ojibway, Sauteaux, Chippewa, Odawa, Potawatomi and Mississauga). These often translate into English as “the people” and/or people who carry a certain role, practice or responsibility (Anishinaabe: the “spontaneous people”, “good human” or Haudenosaunee: “people of the longhouse”). These are the names these communities still use today and can be utilized by those interacting with that community, but the term “Indigenous” is most accepted and inclusive.

. . . but, what about the term “Indian”?

The term “Indian” is a legal term that collectively describes Indigenous peoples in Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. It has legal connotations and definitions (particularly in the *Constitution Act, 1982*), and it is used often in treaties, federal law and in the recognition of rights. While this term is used sometimes legally and socially, it is not an acceptable term in Canada.

What are territorial acknowledgments? Why are these used?

Indigenous peoples and communities have diverse ways of knowing and cultural protocols that guide how they acknowledge each other based on relationships with a specific community, Nation, or territory to recognize humans and non-humans that have ancestral roots and connections to a particular place. A territorial acknowledgment is a way for people to situate themselves and show respect to local Indigenous peoples. Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous peoples and relationships within a geographical and political space. It is recognition of Indigenous history, as well as the arrival of others and the commitments parties share to live together meaningfully. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations, and, while acknowledging territory is very welcome, it is only a small part of cultivating strong relationships in a space. Acknowledging territory and Indigenous peoples should take place within the larger context of genuine and ongoing work to forge real understanding and to challenge the legacies of colonialism. Territorial acknowledgments should not simply be a *pro forma* statement made before getting on with the “real business” of the meeting; they must be understood as a vital *part* of the business. When deciding how to proceed at a gathering, ask an Elder or community member who has agreed to speak what they prefer.

What are appropriate greetings in Indigenous communities?

Informally, greet Indigenous peoples as you would any person. In ceremonies or formal circumstances, however, Indigenous peoples often self-identify by providing their name, Clan, Nation and community. They may also begin events with a prayer or word of acknowledgment for the land or territory and the life that resides there. Always

remember to be mindful and respectful of the diversity among Indigenous people's cultural practices.

What do tobacco offerings mean?

Indigenous peoples often use tobacco for various purposes, including ceremony, trade, payment, medicine, as a special gift or to make requests for cultural teachings. Traditionally grown tobacco is preferred, but some Elders receive loose (common store-bought) tobacco and pipe tobacco for ceremonial and cultural purposes, when necessary. If you wish to provide a tobacco offering, you must arrange a meeting in person with the Elder or Knowledge Keeper. Be sure to make clear your intentions and be specific about your request. The tobacco is presented to the person in a small bundle or pouch held in the palm of your left hand. Keep your hand open and outstretched offering the tobacco. If the Elder or Knowledge Keeper takes the tobacco, they have accepted your request. It is important to note that not all Indigenous Elders (for instance, Inuit Elders) expect a tobacco offering. *Tobacco should only be offered with sincerity and pure intentions, and it should not be viewed as an obligation.*

Is it respectful to offer payment or honoraria when working with Indigenous peoples?

It is respectful to offer Indigenous Elders and guest speakers a gift for sharing their knowledge and wisdom, including an honorarium for their time. *All gifts and honoraria should be prepared well in advance.* Compensation for travel and parking should be arranged. Many Indigenous Elders do not wish to provide their social insurance number or private information for payment (and should not be forced to do so). Some Indigenous peoples may choose to refuse an honorarium or alternatively request that a donation be made to an organization in exchange for their time.

What is smudging?

Smudging is a cleansing of the mind, body and spirit of negative energy and may be viewed as a way to "open the mind and spirit." It has become extensively practised by many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island and is an option when a tobacco burning in an open fire is not feasible. Smudging can be done by any experienced or qualified Indigenous person, but it is usually an Elder or Knowledge Keeper. When arranging a visit with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, verify ahead of time if they intend to smudge. There are different ways that smudging is explained and carried out. It is respectful to follow the directions of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper who is doing the smudging ceremony.

What are Treaty Rights?

Treaty Rights are the rights held by Indigenous peoples in the treaties they entered into with the Crown (Canada) in exchange for use of lands and territories. Generally, these most often pertain to rights to health, education, hunting, trapping, fishing, taxation and land, and these are protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

What are Elders, and why do many people call them “grandmother” or “grandfather”?

Within many Indigenous communities, Elders are a primary source of support, knowledge and expertise. Elders are highly respected and cherished for the roles they fulfill within communities, which often entail offering guidance, advice and support on a wide variety of matters. The terms “grandmother,” “grandfather,” “auntie” or “uncle” are often used in a literal sense, but are also endearing kinship terms for Elders in some communities. An individual identifying as an Elder may have been appointed, sanctioned or may have simply arisen as an adviser, role model and leader within a given community. This may happen formally through a traditional ceremony or commemoration, or can occur informally over time.

What is a “Knowledge Keeper”?

A “Knowledge Keeper” and “Knowledge Holder” are widely used terms that generally describe an individual with traditional or cultural knowledge or expertise. This may include land-based knowledge, singing, beadwork, storytelling or teaching. Some communities have Knowledge Keepers who go by other names, such as “Pipe Carriers” or “Fire Keepers.” An Indigenous person with extensive knowledge and experience in academic, political or economic settings may also be considered a Knowledge Holder.

What are some tips for organizing events with Indigenous peoples and communities?

- Ensure that the location is culturally safe and accessible to everyone invited.
- Ensure proper acknowledgment of the territory at the start of the event.
- Where possible, invite an Elder to open the event with a blessing and invite them to give you direction and advice to ensure proper protocol is being followed. Be sure to find out how best to honour their time and contribution.
- Where possible, explore ways to incorporate Indigenous cultural practices into the event in a respectful manner, such as singing and drumming by Indigenous community members. Make sure to honour this contribution.

- Approach guests/speakers as early as possible, and ensure that all aspects of the event, including honorariums, are clearly communicated in writing.
- Arrange for food and drinks. Sharing food is an essential part of the event.
- Where possible, invite participants across sectors and cultures (e.g., multicultural organizations, Indigenous organizations, faith-based organizations, women’s organizations, child and family services, etc.).
- Events at times may be triggering to some participants, so make sure that supports and opportunities for debriefing are available on-site.
- Consider funding costs to cover transportation for out-of-town speakers, if required.

What are some other things I should know when working with Indigenous peoples?

- Do not rush or limit time for Elders or Knowledge Keepers to do an opening or prayer, as it is considered disrespectful.
- Elders or Knowledge Keepers who follow a traditional life may refuse money as a gift or for compensation (especially if their teaching is related to medicines), but they should still be offered. *Discuss this with them ahead of time.*
- Care for Elders by offering assistance (carrying things, finding them a seat, etc.). If food is being served, *Elders should be offered or served first.*
- If an Indigenous guest or group will be drumming or singing, secure an adequate space for it and consider that the sound may impact nearby rooms.
- Never touch cultural dress/regalia, the body, hair or personal items of an Indigenous person without their permission.
- It is offensive to wear sacred items, such as feathers or headdresses. “Indian” costumes, clothing with Indigenous mascots and other images mocking Indigenous peoples is inappropriate. The same is true of doing “war cries” or the “tomahawk chop.”
- Drums, rattles or other items are sacred. Do not “try them out” or touch them without permission.

Are there any remaining questions, issues or comments?

Creating a Workplace of Reconciliation

Perhaps the most important issue of all is how to create an inclusive workforce for Indigenous clients and employees. There are many ways to do this, but most involve the following:

- Embrace Indigenous diversity in the workplace
- Attract Indigenous staff
- Retain Indigenous staff
- Support career development and progression of Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees who demonstrate competency in Indigenous-specific employment issues
- Improve Indigenous cultural competency in the workplace
- Identify your Indigenous workforce and plan for expanding it
- Provide Indigenous competency training
- Highlight and network the work of your workplace to the public and interact positively with Indigenous communities
- **Have a one-, three- and/or five-year Indigenous workplace or diversity action plan incorporating appropriate assessments of progress**

While these are many ways to proactively create positive and effective relationships with Indigenous communities via inclusive workplaces, here are some “best practices” for employees and managers to implement in their work locales:

Increase employee awareness of Indigenous issues and cultures in Canada

While this workshop is a good first step, many more are needed. Workplaces should strongly encourage all employees to seek out positive opportunities to interact with Indigenous communities in order to be better prepared. Possible engagements include: Indigenous awareness classes, trainers and Elders who can provide essential knowledge regarding history, culture and context within a community. Learn and use basic phrases in the traditional language of the community you are working in, such as greetings, names of places and how to ask for things like the bathroom.

Create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for Indigenous peoples

Encourage awareness by celebrating events (such as National Indigenous People’s Day) with an office potluck or a “lunch and learn” at which Indigenous employees can share information about their culture. Go on a basic tour of the Indigenous community with

which you regularly work and learn about sacred sites and where an Indigenous Friendship Centre, band office or health clinic may be located. Learn local protocols such as gift giving and remember that if visiting with an Elder, tobacco should always be offered or food should always be brought to community functions.

Create relationships between workplaces and Indigenous communities

Reach out to two or three Indigenous organizations in your area and create partnerships that address issues in your community. Connect with a First Nations community in your area, partner with your local Indigenous Friendship Centre or build relationships with local businesses to support training and employment opportunities for Indigenous peoples. Fundraise for local Indigenous youth or women's initiatives that support community, cultural and/or linguistic revitalization and/or refer requests for sponsorship/donation to business partners. Learn when and where certain community events take place (such as a baseball tournament or Powwow) and offer to attend or provide prizes. Ask to witness or host ceremonies or cultural events. Note that as you attend more events, you may be invited to participate (if you wish). Meet with community leaders and Elders in the Indigenous community to reflect upon the ongoing relationships.

Recruit skilled Indigenous employees

Include a message welcoming Indigenous candidates in your job postings (adding a simple message to job postings such as, "We invite applications from Indigenous people, women, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities"), targeting Indigenous job seekers. Submit job postings in places that specifically target an Indigenous audience. Also be aware that potential Indigenous employees may be looking for specific areas involving: an accepting, respectful and non-judgmental work environment; equality of treatment; pay equity; cultural diversity in the workplace; stability and longevity; potential for increased responsibility; competitive salary and benefits; and specific opportunities for professional growth and development. Networking is also often the most effective method to recruit Indigenous employees.

Create a one-, three- and/or five-year Indigenous workplace action plan

In collaboration with management, create appropriate deliverables and assessments of progress of your plan. Identify one or two baseline measures before you start, then measure results after one or two years to determine progress. Conduct surveys and measure percentages of Indigenous employees in workplaces and candidates per job posting, then share news with the rest of the organization and stakeholders.

Turn and Talk: Enacting Reconciliation

Get in a small (two- to three-person) group. You will soon be named Group 1 or Group 2. Within your group, examine the following situation:

Group 1

Examine your current workplace and “Indigenize” it. Knowing what you have just learned, design a five-year plan with deliverables and a small assessment model to determine your program’s success and areas for development. Consider what content is important for employee training and brainstorm a list of specific issues Indigenous employees may have in your workplace and how these are or can be addressed. Choose a presenter and share your pair’s experiences with a nearby Group 2.

Group 2

Examine your current workplace and “Indigenize” it. Knowing what you have just learned, design a five-year plan with deliverables and a small assessment model to determine your program’s success and areas for development. Organize two Indigenous Day “outings” in the community and troubleshoot some issues employees may have. Now, pick two “outreach” events your workplace could attend to build healthy relationships with the Indigenous community and determine what you will do for it. Choose a presenter and share your pair’s experiences with a nearby Group 1.

Further Resources on Indigenous Histories and Residential Schools

For more resources on residential schools in Canada, see: *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* by J.R. Miller; *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada* by Agnes Grant; and *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* by John S. Milloy. The CBC Digital Archives also has an excellent video- and radio-clip section entitled, "A Lost Heritage: Canada's Residential Schools," which is available at www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools. The booklet *100 Years of Loss* by the Legacy of Hope Foundation is also an excellent primer on residential schools and it is available at: <http://legacyofhope.ca/education/>.

The following is an excellent resources list on residential schools, originally created by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF). This extensive list was obtained and reprinted with exclusive permission from Spear Communications Group, which hosts the now-archived AHF website. Access the list at: www.ahf.ca/downloads/bibliography.pdf.

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