First Nations, Métis and Inuit

Blanket Exercise

Treaty 8 and Métis (Alberta) Adaptation

FACILITATOR GUIDE

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca

KAIROS

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This resource was developed as part of the Alberta Teachers' Association partnership with Alberta Education for the Joint Commitment to Action Walking Together Project. We are grateful for the guidance of the Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members who assisted us on this journey.

The text in this script has been adapted from the original KAIROS Blanket Exercise, which may be found at www.kairosblanketexercise.org.

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SECTION I: ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP

The activity begins with blankets being arranged on the floor to represent Canada before the arrival of Europeans. Participants representing Indigenous peoples move around on the blankets, as if they are using and occupying the land. A narrator reads from a script while someone playing the role of a European joins and interacts with those on the blankets.

As the script traces the history of the relationship between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in Canada, participants respond to various cues and read prepared scrolls. At the end of the exercise only a few people remain on the blankets, which have been folded into small bundles and cover only a fraction of their original area.

Created in 1997, the KAIROS Blanket Exercise is a succinct overview of Indigenous rights in Canada that explores the major themes and findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). You are strongly encouraged to use the exercise as part of a larger program of professional learning. You can find more information at www.kairosblanketexercise.org.

Workshop Outcomes

- Understand the historical relationship between Europeans and Indigenous peoples of Canada.
- Reflect on the impact of legislation and policies intended to result in assimilation.
- Review key historical and current events that affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada and Alberta.
- Explore the major themes of assimilation, discrimination, Indigenous rights and reconciliation.
- Reflect upon your own attitudes, beliefs and dispositions about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in a non-threatening environment.

SECTION II: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Initial Contact with the Workshop Sponsor

Call the principal or contact person to obtain information about why this workshop was chosen and how it fits within the larger program of professional learning for the staff. This information will help you plan the workshop to meet the needs of the participants. This workshop is best provided in a half-day format, but can be offered as a 1.5 hour workshop. Stress the importance of having enough time to do the topic justice and for participants to share their experiences.

Questions To Ask Before Preparing the Outline

It may be useful to work from the following list. Use these questions as a reference to familiarize yourself with areas that should be considered before preparing to deliver the workshop.

1. What is the goal for this workshop?
—Why is this workshop requested at this time? Who decided to request the workshop?

2. Who is the audience?
—What are their roles? What are their attitudes to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education in general? What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and potential contributions do they bring to this topic/workshop? Are there any local "experts" who will be attending the workshop? How many people will be attending?

3. What are the desired outcomes?
—What are the desired outcomes of the workshop? What is the connection between this workshop and the long-term goals of the district or school? How are teachers currently supported to meet the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Foundational Knowledge in the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS)? What are the teachers' approaches to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education and curriculum outcomes?

4. What resources will we have to work with?
—How much time is available? Will there be pre-event dialogue or activities? What is the plan for follow-up after this workshop?

5. What is the school context?
—How many teachers are in the school this year? What are the demographics of the staff? What are the grade configuration and student population? How many students self-identify as Indigenous? Does the school currently have any programs or activities to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit education? How many staff self-identify as Indigenous?

6. What are the unique characteristics of the district?
—What are the number of schools; number of teachers, and number of students? Are there any contextual variables to be aware of? Does the school district have any tuition agreements with local First Nations Authorities? What district programs and services are provided to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit education?

Work from a standard set of logistical questions. Consider the following issues:

1. Might any surprises affect the amount of actual presentation time?
—Will there be any business to conduct before this presentation starts? Can people really get back from lunch that soon?

2. What physical set-ups do you require?
—Inform the workshop organizer of your requirements for: name tags, room arrangements, snack arrangements, audio visual equipment, sound system, and participant groupings. Request internet access so you can show the opening YouTube video.

3. Who are the volunteers to assist with the workshop?
—Is there an Elder who can provide the opening and closing prayer?
—Sometimes individuals experience strong emotions during the workshop. Is there a school counsellor or another professional available to provide support during the workshop? You will need this person to meet with you before the workshop to confirm they are comfortable providing that support.

4. What travel and transportation details should you check?
—Where is the workshop being held? Can you get into the room 45 minutes before the event? Can someone help you transport materials and equipment?

SECTION III: WORKSHOP PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Number of Participants

The Blanket Exercise works best with anywhere between 15 and 60 people. With fewer participants, the challenge is to ensure not too many people leave the blankets, so you will want to hand out slightly fewer than the suggested number of white and yellow index cards. The larger the group, the more difficult it is to have a good discussion or debrief at the end. If the group is large you may choose to divide into two groups to do the closing Talking Circle, provided there is another experienced person to lead the second Talking Circle.

Support During and After

The Blanket Exercise can cause emotions and difficult memories to surface. Think about what kind of support you can provide during the workshop and what type of follow-up you can make available.

You may want to have one person present whose role it is to support anyone in distress. Consider how you will close off the session in a way that is affirming and uplifting so that people leave in a good way.

Give a thorough explanation at the beginning of what is about to take place and let participants know that they can leave or step back if they do not feel ready to delve into those parts of the exercise that resonate with their own experience.

Blanket Exercise Enhancements—Deepening the Learning

Additions to the script: KAIROS encourages you to make the Blanket Exercise script specific to the territory where your school or group is located by researching and writing scrolls or additions to the script with information about the local history or current situation. For example, in the part of the script that refers to residential schools, a scroll could be added about a residential school that operated nearby. Please be respectful when doing this; if the additions you are making are not part of your own story, be sure to work in collaboration with the appropriate people.

Inviting an Indigenous Elder: You can invite a First Nations, Métis or Inuit elder to open and close the workshop, lead a talking circle, and speak about how the content of the Blanket Exercise resonates with them and their community. This will greatly enrich the learning

experience for the participants and help to build relationships. It will also help to create a safe space for participants, particularly for Indigenous participants.

Preparations Before the Workshop Begins

In addition to the general suggestions provided in Section II, please consider the following:

1. Visit the school district website to learn more about the district.

2. Request the appropriate room set-up and audio-visual equipment well in advance of the workshop. The room must be large enough for every person to be seated in a chair in a circle. You will need only two tables: one for your materials and one for the material handed out by the European. You will need a computer to access YouTube video and a LCD projector with sound.

3. Read the entire script prior to the workshop and check the contents of the Blanket Exercise Kit before you travel to the site.

4. Print one copy of the script for the European, one copy of the KAIROS handout—how to address strong emotions and the Four Direction posters (printed in colours of the Medicine Wheel).

5. Arrive at the site at least 45 minutes in advance and check AV technology and to meet with the people who have volunteered to provide support and to act as the European.

6. Arrange the required number of chairs in a circle with enough open space in the middle to lay out the blankets. Place the blankets, scrolls, and traditional items on the chairs.

7. Set the additional items on a side table for the European to hand out during the exercise: Set of three maps, terms and definition cards (optional), small pox blanket, residential school blankets, index cards, and dolls.

8. Before participants enter the room, put on the slide displaying the workshop title slide.

9. Model creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment by greeting each person as they arrive in the workshop room.

On-site Materials and AV Requirements	Materials Needed
LCD Projector Speakers for YouTube clips Computer and screen Masking tape	**Blanket Exercise Kit:** 12-20 blankets Blue, white and yellow index cards Copies of maps Artifacts Scrolls Dolls (2) Tissue Four directions posters Two Métis sashes Item to be used for Talking Circle (rock or stick works well) Terms and definitions cards

SECTION IV: NOTES TO FACILITATOR

10 Ways to Minimize Resistance, KAIROS

Resistance is normal: resistance to what is being taught or how it is being taught. What we want to do it minimize it so that it does not interfere with learning. Here are 10 ways to do this:

1. **Early invitation and plan.** Tell learners in advance what they will be learning and doing. Getting rid of the element of surprise will minimize resistance.

2. **Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe enough to be engaged and learn. If they don't, they may start to resist the process.

3. **Show respect.** Showing respect to all learners can minimize resistance. People can react to feeling left out or unvalued.

4. **Affirmation.** Everyone likes to be appreciated and affirmed. The more you do this, the less resistance you will have from your learners.

5. **Relevance.** When learners do not understand how something is important in their life they will resist the learning experience. Help all learners know *why* this content is important in their lives and why it matters.

6. **Choice.** Offering learners choices on how to learn or how to participate or where to sit, can minimize resistance. They will appreciate the feeling of having input in their learning experience.

7. **Transparency.** Always explain to learners why you are doing something if it is different from what they are used to. Once they understand there is a reason, they will be less resistant.

8. **Welcome it.** Never avoid resistance because it will most likely build and come back to you *stronger*. Welcome and celebrate it because often the best learning comes when an idea or way of doing something is first resisted. Just don't get 'hooked' by it.

9. **Check in.** You can check in with learners privately before the session, during a break or with the entire group at the end of a session. If you let them honestly tell you how they feel and they see you responding to what they tell you, resistance will be minimized.

10. **Stick to the program.** Don't change the agenda unless you have a good reason and explain it to the group.

How to Ensure Safety, KAIROS

1. **Connecting with a group before the Blanket Exercise event itself** starts to work on building safety—for everyone. An email, face-to-face or phone call can go a long way.

2. **Warmly welcome each person as they arrive.** How they are greeted can set the stage for what happens throughout.

3. **Affirm all answers.** Paraphrase and say "thank you", even in response to those tougher more negative responses. Participants need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, is appreciated and welcomed. When learners know that all answers are valid, even if they are not universally shared by the group, they will be more open to speaking their minds.

4. **Keep the workshop short and tightly focused.** Facilitators should resist talking a lot, but let the role play speak for itself. Also, during the debrief, it should be more about the participants and less about you and your ideas.

5. **Wait at least five seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say, whether they want to share and what questions they may have.

6. **Encourage cross-talk.** People are accustomed to the "teacher" as the focus of a session and all discussion. Facilitators need to encourage the group to answer and respond to each other's ideas and questions rather than a back and forth between the participants and the facilitator. Of course the facilitator ensures that the group is on-task and on-time.

7. **Use partner interactions during the debrief: pairs, trios, table groups.** These increase engagement, get more voices going, and create more safety for "rough draft" thinking. Especially at the end of the Blanket Exercise role play there is a need for everyone to share how they feel (not how they think about something)—get the emotions out before people go home. If you do a debrief in a large group, only a few people will have the opportunity to share, and it is usually the same few who always speak.

How to Address Strong Emotions, KAIROS

Having a strong emotional response is normal and common for participants in *The Blanket Exercise*. How we do, or do not, deal with it can make the difference between a healthy positive experience and a negative one. Here are a few suggestions:

Sorrow/Sadness

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. There is no need to talk, just sit in silence and allow the person to feel that emotion**.**
3. Do not try to "fix" it or gloss it over.
4. Have tissue handy.

Anger (positive)

1. Assure the person this is a normal and important response.
2. Although it is natural to want to jump into action, it is important to live with this emotional response and then slowly find ways to take action.

Anger (negative)

1. Acknowledge this response; do not try to ignore it.
2. Avoid being pulled in to a deep discussion about specific facts and figures or personal stories.

Guilt

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. Although many of these are the wrong doings of our fore fathers, it is now our responsibility to change the direction of the future.

Denial/Disbelief

1. Assure the person this is a normal response, because how is it possible we have never heard these things before.
2. Highlight the fact that all this information comes from the 1996 Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples. A 4,000-page document based on deep research into facts of history.

SECTION V: MATERIALS

Four Direction Posters: Hang the North, South, East, and West posters on the appropriate wall. If you are not sure of the directions ask someone from the community to help you.

Blankets: Each kit should have approximately 12–20 blankets (depending on the group size and room space). Set aside three blankets: two for smallpox virus and one for residential schools. These blankets will be handed out later by the European. Set the remaining 9–17 blankets on the chairs before participants enter the room.

Traditional Items: If you are using traditional items, place them on the chairs before participants enter the room or hand them out when participants move onto the blankets. **Métis sash** and other **artifacts** for trading.

Scrolls 1–26: Scrolls can be placed on the chairs before the exercise starts or handed out when participants move onto the blankets. Participants will read the scroll out loud when asked to during the exercise. With a small group it is okay for people to read more than one scroll. Scroll 19 can be saved and given to a participant acting as a residential school student.

Maps: Distribute the maps during the opener (Turtle Island, Treaties, and Aboriginal Lands Today). Print enough maps so that the total number of copies equals the number of participants. Each group of three will have one copy of each map. For example: an audience of 30 will require 10 copies of each of the three maps.

Terms and Definition Cards (OPTIONAL OPENER): The terms and definition cards will be included in the Blanket Exercise Kit. This opener provides an opportunity for participants to become familiar with the terms used in the role play and to meet others in the group.

Index Cards: White, yellow, and blue. Count out the cards and have them ready on the side table before the workshop begins. All the index cards will be handed out by the European during the first part of the exercise when the European arrives and greets the First Nations people.

1. Count out **white cards**. For a little less than half the participants. Important: with a smaller group (less than 30 people), count white cards for only one-third of participants. With a very small group (12 or less), give only 2 white cards.
2. Count out 2 **blue cards**. For a smaller group (less than 30 people) give only 1 blue card.
3. Count out 3 **yellow cards**, one with an "X" on it. For a large group (more than 40 people) give 6 yellow cards. For a small group (less than 20 people) give only 3 yellow cards.

Dolls: Two or three dolls are required for each exercise. After the European has handed out the cards they should gently give each doll to a participant who does not have a card and say to them that this is the participant's child.

Tissue: Have two or three boxes of tissue available during the closing talking circle.

The Blanket Exercise

NOTE: Narrator speaking notes are printed in red. European speaking notes are in green. Scroll text is printed in blue.

A. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome participants and invite them to sit on a chair. Introduce yourself and the person serving as the "European". Thank participants for coming to the workshop.

Speaking Notes:

Today you will be participating in an interactive role play exercise which has been developed by KAIROS Canada and contextualized by the Alberta Teachers' Association.

KAIROS is an ecumenical movement for ecological justice and human rights. Formed in 2001 by bringing together over 10 previous inter-church coalitions, its social justice commitments reach back over 40 years. KAIROS is a charitable joint venture administered by the United Church of Canada.

The KAIROS Board is made up of representatives of our eleven churches and religious organizations.

KAIROS Members:

The Anglican Church of Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
Canadian Religious Conference
Christian Reformed Church in North America (Canada Corporation)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Mennonite Central Committee of Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF)
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
The United Church of Canada

The KAIROS Board and the Indigenous Rights Circle have engaged in a dialogue over a number of years on how KAIROS might better work with and not for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. This dialogue, and related opportunities to engage the whole of KAIROS in changed attitudes and behaviour, has been referred to as "resetting the relationship." KAIROS will continue the work of "resetting the relationship" with Indigenous peoples, by striving to fully implement the principles, norms and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This includes seeking to have ongoing accountability to Indigenous peoples for KAIROS' Indigenous rights work.

As a result, one of KAIROS's program priorities is Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Colonization has bred violence, racism, mistrust, and led to massive inequities in the social, health, and economic realities of Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples means a new relationship built on truth, a relationship of mutual respect that fully affirms the dignity, contributions, and rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the globe and which strives to bridge existing gaps through renewed social justice.

ABOUT THE BLANKET EXERCISE

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that teaches the Indigenous rights history we're rarely taught. Developed in response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples—which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as one of the key steps to reconciliation, the Blanket Exercise covers over 500 years of history in a one and a half hour participatory workshop.

You will be invited to take on the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Standing on blankets that represent the land, you will walk through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization, and resistance. As your facilitators, we represent the story narrator (or narrators) and the European colonizers. During the course of the role play some of you will be reading scrolls and carrying cards which will ultimately determine your outcomes as Indigenous people. Please keep these cards visible and in your hand during the exercise. By engaging on an emotional and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy. This exercise will conclude with a traditional talking circle which serves as a debriefing session in which you will have the opportunity to discuss the experience as a group.

I need to inform you that some people can be triggered by the Blanket Exercise, especially if they have been personally impacted by the laws and policies described in the script. For this reason, it is important to know what is about to take place—the experience includes information about residential schools, the 60s scoop, loss of status, and missing and murdered Indigenous women. If you experience strong emotions at any time, you may leave the room or simply sit on the chairs in the circle and observe.

At this time introduce the person who can offer support to individuals who are affected by the experience.

B. Opening Activities

Choose one or more of the following openers depending on the time for the workshop.

1. Video Introduction

www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5DrXZUIinU (5:48 Minutes)

Justice for Aboriginal People was produced by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). The Public Service Alliance of Canada represents more than 170,000 workers in every province and territory in Canada and in locations around the world. Its members work for federal government departments and agencies, Crown Corporations, universities, casinos, community services agencies, Aboriginal communities, airports, and the security sector among others. PSAC is headquartered in Ottawa with 23 regional offices across Canada.

This five minute video sends the message that now it is time for reconciliation between Canada and its Aboriginal people. It provides a brief summary of the key points in Canada's history where injustices have been done to Aboriginal people while challenging the view that Aboriginal people should "just get over it".

2. Review of Maps

- Distribute one set of three maps, 'Turtle Island', 'Treaties' and 'Aboriginal Lands Today' to groups of two or three. Ask participants to look at the three maps and compare them with the person sitting next to them.
- Ask participants to share their observations with the whole group. What do you see when you compare the maps?
- Closing Comments: Explain that they will learn how we went from a time when Indigenous peoples used all the land we now call Canada (what some Indigenous peoples refer to as "Turtle Island"), to a time when land reserved for Indigenous peoples is only a very tiny part of Canada. It's important to note that the reserves below the 60th parallel make up less than one half of one per-cent of Canada's land mass. Ask participants to set the maps aside.

3. Terms and Definitions

- Distribute the terms and definitions cards to participants. Ask participants to stand up and mingle with others in the room. Introduce yourself and share the definition or term that is written on your card. The object is to find the matching terms and definitions. There are more terms than definitions, so there might be 3 or 4 people in each group.
- When they have found their matching definition partner, have them raise their hand so you will know when they are ready to proceed.

- Debrief by reviewing the terms and definitions (see Appendix A). Asking each pair to read their term and matching definition out loud to the whole group. Answer any questions.

C. Blanket Exercise Script

NOTE: Narrator speaking notes are printed in red. European speaking notes are in green. Scroll text is printed in blue.

Have your "European" standing by with the script, the right number of white, yellow, and blue index cards, dolls, and the folded blanket for small pox and residential schools nearby.

Prepare to Begin the Exercise.

***Narrator*:** Please remove your shoes and place them under your chair. Lay the blankets on the floor so that they overlap slightly and no floor is showing. Now step onto the blankets, taking with you the traditional items that may have been on your chair. Now that you are on the blankets, you must not step off unless you are asked to do so.

As you step onto the blankets you are stepping back in time to 11,000 BC, after the melting of the glaciers when Indigenous people first moved into the area now known as Alberta. Moving forward we begin the exercise at 1500 AD, before the Europeans arrived in this area. You are now in the role of the Inuit, First Nations and later Métis people of the land now known as Alberta.

Now move around on the blankets, to use and occupy the land as if you are living on it. Greet each other and trade the traditional artifacts.

These blankets represent the northern part of Turtle Island, or what we now know as Canada, before the arrival of Europeans. There is archeological evidence at Vermillion Lakes that indicates the first human activity, in the Bow Valley area, was as early as 10,300 BC. Long before the arrival of Europeans, Turtle Island was your home, and home to millions of people like you. You lived in hundreds of nations. Northern Alberta was partly occupied by sub-arctic peoples-from the Dene in the sub-arctic to the Woodland Cree in the boreal forest. Our Ancestors of the sub-arctic peoples were nomadic and moved throughout the north following the animals you hunted and the plants and berries you harvested for food.

There was a lot of communal support with everyone looking out for each other and no one was left without. Everyone had a distinct role to play with men hunting and fishing and distributing the food to the community, and women taking care of the home life. Children also helped out and learned from the Elders. Herbs were used for medicine and healing.

Each community had its own language, culture, traditions, laws, and governments. As communities, you often worked together and cooperated with one another. As with all people, sometimes there was conflict. Before the newcomers arrived, one of the ways in which you, the original peoples, ended disputes was by making treaties.

The land, represented here by the blankets, is very important to you. All of your needs—food, clothing, shelter, culture, and your spirituality—are taken care of by the land. In return, you take your responsibility to take care of the land very seriously. Please read scroll 1.

Scroll 1: "One of my favorite things about my culture is how we're taught that everything on the Earth is to be respected. It's an important part of the culture and covers everything. That includes respecting yourself. Respecting yourself is one of the most important things my culture has taught me. Also, the land, water, plants, air, and animals are all very important to our culture and need to be respected. Without any of it, what would we be?"

—Kateri, a Mohawk youth from a community in Quebec

***Narrator*:** Things were happening in Europe at the end of the 15th century that would mean a huge change for you. European explorers had just quote-unquote "discovered" you and your lands. This started a fierce competition between European nations.

European *[In a loud, pompous voice, striding around the outside of the blankets]:* Without even consulting you, we made deals amongst ourselves and divided up control over you and your lands. Usually, whichever nation discovered your land first took control with the blessing of the Christian church. This practice is now called the "Doctrine of Discovery."

***Narrator*:** And so began the so-called European "discovery" of Turtle Island. Please read scroll 2.

***Scroll 2*:** "At contact with Europeans, each of the hundreds of Indigenous Peoples of Indigenous America possessed all the elements of nationhood that were well-established by European settlers: territory, governing structures, legal systems, and a historical continuity with our territories. Nothing since the arrival of Columbus has occurred to merit any reduction in the international legal status of Indigenous Peoples. The recognition of Indigenous Nations and our rights pose no threat to non-Indigenous Peoples."

—Sharon Venne, Cree

***European*:** *Step onto the blankets from the east. Begin shaking hands, moving around confidently, and randomly handing out the white, blue, and yellow index cards. After distributing all the index cards, gently give the dolls to two participants who do not have cards, and tell them the doll is their child.*

Narrator *[begin reading as the European walks around]:* When the Europeans first arrived on Turtle Island, there were many more Indigenous people than Europeans. The newcomers depended on you for their survival, and you helped them to understand how you did things—how you taught your children, how you took care of people who were sick, how you lived off the land in a way that left enough for future generations, and how your governments worked.

In the beginning, there was a lot of cooperation and support between you and the settlers. The settlers and their leaders recognized you, the First Peoples, as having your own governments, laws, and territories. They recognized you as independent nations. They made agreements or treaties with you. These treaties explained how you were going to share the land, the water, the animals, and the plants.

These treaties were very important because they were agreements between you and the kings and queens of countries in Europe. They made these agreements with you because you were here first, the land belonged to you, and you had your own governments. The treaties officially recognized your power and independence as nations.

The Europeans understood they could not force their laws or way of life on the people who were here long before they ever arrived. They understood that you had rights.

European *[Speaking in a loud pompous voice]:* In the Royal Proclamation of 1763, King George the Third said "Indigenous nations own their lands". The King said that the only legal way newcomers could gain control of those lands was by making treaties between the two nations. The year 2013 marked the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation.

Narrator**:** Later on, the Government of Canada was formed, and the Royal Proclamation became part of Canadian law. For you, the Indigenous peoples, the treaties were very special and sacred agreements. They were statements of peace, friendship, and sharing. They were based on respect and honesty. Sharing was very important to you. The hunters shared their food with everyone and the families helped one another raise the children. In the treaties, you tried to help the Europeans understand what you meant by sharing. Children of mixed blood began to surface and were known as Métis.

European**:** *Select three of the participants and tie a Métis sash on each of them: around the waist if male, over one shoulder to tie diagonally across body at waist if female. These participants represent the Métis people. Begin to slowly fold the edges of the blankets, making the blanket space smaller and smaller. When blankets are empty you can take them away and put them in a pile outside the activity. Very gradually fold and remove blankets until the middle of the exercise when the Indian Act is introduced and participants are placed on reserve.*

Narrator**:** *Remind participants that they must NOT step off the blankets. The goal is to stay on the blankets, even as they get smaller. The Narrator should also remind everyone that Indigenous people have always resisted when someone tried to take the land away.*

Narrator**:** But the Europeans didn't see it that way anymore. They now had a different view of the treaties. For them, land was something that could be bought and sold. Treaties were a way of getting you, the Indigenous peoples, to give up your land. Please read scroll 3.

***Scroll 3*:** "Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created."

—Georges Erasmus, Dene Nation, co-chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

***Narrator**:* After a while, you didn't get along very well with the Europeans. When the War of 1812 ended, the Europeans no longer needed you to help them with the fighting. As the fur trade dried up, the European newcomers turned more and more to farming and started looking for more land.

Before too long, there were more Europeans than Indigenous peoples. One reason for this was that beginning in 1780, European diseases came with the fur traders to Alberta. Initial epidemics were particularly deadly, as previously unexposed populations had no resistance. Smallpox epidemics claimed thousands of lives. In fact, there are some people who believe that half the Indigenous people alive at the time died from these diseases. In some communities, nine out of ten people died.

***European** [Walk up to a person who does not have a yellow or blue card or a doll, hand them the folded blanket and read]:* In some places, blankets infected with the deadly smallpox virus were given or traded to the Indigenous people by settlers and military leaders, such as Lord Jeffrey Amherst. You represent one of the many Indigenous people who died from smallpox after having come into contact with such blankets. Please step off the blanket.

***Narrator*:** Those of you with white index cards step off the blankets. You represent the Aboriginal people who died of the various diseases. Please be silent for a moment to remember those who died from disease.

***European** [Walk up to <u>one</u> person in the "east" who does not have a card and tell that person]:* You represent the Beothuk, one of the original people of what is now the island of Newfoundland. You also died from diseases you had never seen before. Because the Europeans overhunted, some of you starved. Some of you died in violent encounters with the settlers trying to take your lands. Some of you were hunted down and killed. In 1829, the last person recognized by the Europeans as your people, Shanawdithit (Shanna-deet-dee), died in St. John's. Your language and culture became extinct. Please step off the blanket.

European and Narrator walk to the "south" and choose two people who are standing close together.

***Narrator*:** You represent the First Nations peoples that were divided when the border between the United States and British North America was extended under the London Convention of 1818 from Lake of the Woods, across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. This border divides First Nations and Métis communities and cuts you off from each other. Please move to separate blankets.

European *[Pull one blanket south and guide one person to the United States blanket. Then walk to the "west" and choose one person who does not have a card, tell them]:* Construction of the railway to Winnipeg opened up the Prairies to settlers. More land was needed for farming and in 1867 the Government of Canada bought a huge piece of Rupertsland from the Hudson's Bay Company. Overnight, your homeland became Canada's frontier. This was very hard for the Blackfoot, Cree, and Métis living in the Prairies. You, the Métis, fought for your land in 1885 during the Red River Rebellion and the North West Resistance. You won some of these battles, but in the end you were defeated by the government's soldiers. You represent those Métis leaders who died in the uprising, were put in jail, or who were executed such as Louis Riel who was hung on 1885 11 16. Please step off the blanket.

Narrator**:** After the rebellions, the Métis people entered a period of dispersion. Fearing for their lives, Métis people changed their names and fled in all directions; some moving to the United States while others went back to their First Nation families, and became treaty "Indians". Others denied their native heritage altogether, some headed west and settled in Fort Vermilion and St Albert. These were dark times for the Métis, a time of persecution and extreme poverty due to their landlessness and general lack of education. The Métis fit into two worlds, but belonged to none.

European and Narrator walk to the "north" and choose a small group of people standing together on a blanket. Read to them the following two paragraphs:

Narrator**:** In the High Arctic, Inuit communities were moved to isolated, unfamiliar, and barren lands: often with negative consequences. The tuberculosis (TB) epidemic, for example, reached northern communities in the 1950s. By 1956, one-seventh of the entire Inuit population was being treated for TB, while one-third of the population overall was affected. A large number of infected individuals died from the disease. Many children were removed from their homes to be sent down south for treatment in TB sanatoriums, some never to return. One of these sanatoriums was the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton, operating from 1945 to 1967. In 2010 Health Canada reported the rate for TB among the Inuit is 185 times higher than for Canadian-born non-Aboriginal people. Many First Nations and Métis people were also removed from their homes and placed in the Charles Camsell hospital.

European**:** *Select three participants, one with a Métis sash, and ask them to step off blankets.*

You represent the different aboriginal groups who died in such sanatoriums, like the Inuit and the Innu at Davis Inlet, along with many other Indigenous communities who suffered and sometimes died because you were forced to move to an unfamiliar place. Please move your blanket away from the others, fold it small, and stand on it.

European**:** *Assist in moving their blanket, folding it small and directing the group to once again stand on it.*

***Narrator*:** In 1830, some 40 million bison still roamed the North American plains. However, the lucrative robe trade accelerated overhunting of the plains bison by Indigenous groups and white settlers alike. Historians have argued that the rise of capitalist ideology drove indigenous and white hunters alike to compete for every last animal. A multitude of factors—disease, drought, westward expansion, commercialization and industrialization of hunting, colonialism, and the introduction of domestic animals from Europe—caused the near-extinction of the bison. By 1878, the last remnants of the once great bison herds crossed south into Montana. Those with blue cards, step off the blankets. You represent those who died of hunger after being forced off your original land and away from your hunting grounds.

***European*:** As more of us arrived, we needed more land. Many of us Europeans thought we were better than other kinds of people, including you. Soon, we didn't think of you as friends and partners, but as a "problem" to be solved. We started ignoring or changing our laws to make it easier for us to take your land. Some land was taken in war. Some land was taken after you died.

***Narrator*:** As Indigenous peoples, you lost more than just your land. Because the land is so important to you, when it was taken away some of you also lost your way of living, your culture and, in some cases, your reason to live. Please read scroll 4.

Scroll 4: *Terra Nullius (TER-ah NOO-lee-us).* The idea of Terra Nullius, which in Latin means "land belonging to no one", meant European countries could send out explorers and when they found land, they could claim it for their nation. These were often lands we were using.

***European*:** The land wasn't empty and we as Europeans knew it, so we changed the idea to include lands not being used by "civilized" peoples, or lands not being put to "civilized" use. It was us who decided what it meant to be "civilized". We decided that because you and your people were not using the land in a "civilized way", we could take it and it was almost impossible to stop us.

***Narrator*:** In 1866, the sacred Manitou Stone, sometimes called 'Old Man Buffalo', was taken from a hilltop near Hardisty by George McDougall, a Methodist missionary. This meteor is said to have been placed on the plains by the Great Spirit after the flood. It was revered as protector of the buffalo and bringer of peace and prosperity. The belief was that if it was removed, the buffalo would disappear and the person who removed it would be punished. Following the stone's removal, the buffalo did almost disappear, and war, disease, and starvation visited Indigenous peoples. In 1874, McDougall gave the stone to Victoria College in Ontario. In 1972, Victoria College sent the meteorite to the Provincial Museum of Alberta on permanent loan, on the condition that the Provincial Museum undertake consultations with interested First Nations. Requests by the First Nations people to have it returned to its original location have, thus far, been ignored. Please read scroll 5.

Scroll 5: *The British North America (BNA) Act.* The BNA Act, also known as the Constitution Act, 1867, put "Indians and Lands reserved for Indians" under the control of the federal government. When this happened, we lost our rights and control over our lands.

***Narrator*:** This law gave control of your lands to the Government of Canada, which at that time was only made up of people from Europe. You, the Indigenous people, were not involved in the creation of this law that would have such a big impact on your lives. More and more, the plan was to try and make *you* like the Europeans. The Métis, in the meantime, had no lands and were called 'Road Allowance People' because they lived and squatted on any land available usually on road allowances. Please read scroll 6.

Scroll 6: *Indian Act.* In 1876, all the laws dealing with us were gathered together and put into the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* completely changed our lives. As long as our cultures were strong, it was difficult for the government to take our lands so the government used the *Indian Act* to attack who we were as peoples. Hunting and fishing were now limited and our spiritual ceremonies like the potlatch, Ghost dance, and Sundance were now against the law. This didn't change until the 1950s. In fact, sacred ceremonial objects were taken away or hidden away. It was only through the First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act in 2000 these items resurfaced.

European *[In a loud voice]:* Now hear this! According to the *British North America Act* of 1867 and the *Indian Act* of 1876, you and all of your territories are now under the direct control of the Canadian federal government. You will now be placed on reserves. Please fold your blankets until they are just large enough to stand on and not touching the other blankets.

Pause while this takes place.

***Narrator*:** Treaty 8 was an agreement signed on June 21, 1899, between Queen Victoria and various First Nations of the Lesser Slave Lake area. The Treaty was signed just south of present-day Grouard, Alberta. The increased contact and conflict between First Nations of the region and Europeans prompted the Government of Canada to enter into Treaty 8. In September 1899, the Treaty and Half Breed Commissioners finally concluded the treaty process, with 2,217 accepting the treaty, and another 1,234 people opting for scrip. The land covered by Treaty was 840,000 square kilometers, and included northern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan, and a southernmost portion of the Northwest Territories. Many adhesions to this agreement were signed that same year. Chief Keenooshayoo was one of the First Nations signatories to Treaty 8. First Nations that are considered signatories to Treaty 8 included Woodland Cree, Dunne-za (or "Beaver"), and Denesuline (Chipewyan). Father Albert Lacombe, a trusted Catholic missionary, had been asked by Canadian officials to be present to help convince First Nations that it was in their interest to enter into a treaty. The treaty established reserve land, promised annual payments, and/or provisions from the Queen and promised continued hunting and trapping rights on the land surrendered.

You went from being strong, independent First Nations, with your own governments, to isolated and poor "bands" that depended on the government for almost everything. You were treated like you knew nothing and like you couldn't run your own lives. You became the responsibility of the federal government. Through the *Indian Act*, the federal government continues to this day to

deny you your basic rights. These rights are things that most Canadians take for granted, such as healthy schools, proper housing, and clean running water.

European *[Walking slowly around the blankets]:* Also, you may not leave your reserve without a permit. You may not vote. You may not get together to talk about your rights. You may not practice your spirituality or your traditional forms of government. If you do any of these things, you may be put in jail. Sit down on the blankets.

Narrator: The *Indian Act* also tried to stop Indigenous peoples from fighting to keep their land. For example, under the *Indian Act*, it was against the law to raise money to fight for land rights in the courts until the 1950s. In Treaty 8, under the Indian Act, many First Nations were missed during the count therefore the First Nations started 'land claims' processes. There are approximately 13 land claims that have found settlements in courts however, there are 2 still on-going: Lubicon Lake Indian Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation. Please read scroll 7.

Scroll 7: "I know what the government did in the past; they said where we had to live. I know that we're not treated equally now, because I can feel it. We're all Canadians and we should all be treated equally."

—Cassie, a Mi'kmaq (mick-mack) youth from a community in Nova Scotia

Please read scroll 8.

Scroll 8: *Enfranchisement (en-fran-CHISE-ment).* Under this federal government Enfranchisement policy, all First Nations people who became doctors, teachers, lawyers, or soldiers lost their legal Indian status. This was called being granted "enfranchisement".

***Narrator*:** In other words, the government would no longer legally recognize you as a First Nations person. This cut you off from your communities, including First Nations soldiers returning from war or First Nations lawyers who were not allowed to fight for the rights of their people.

European *[Choose one person who does not have a yellow card and ask them to leave their blanket and stand somewhere on the floor. Tell them]:* You were enfranchised for serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, gaining a university education, for leaving your reserve for long periods of time (for instance, for employment), and for Aboriginal women, if they married non-Indian men or if their Indian husband died or abandoned them. Some land was given to enfranchised First Nation and Métis as scrip, which was later seized for taxes in many cases. Please read Scroll 9.

Scroll 9: *Assimilation (ah-sim-ill-EH-shun).* The government thought the "Indian problem" would solve itself as more and more Indigenous people died from diseases and others became part of the larger Canadian society. As one government employee said, the government's goal was "to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and that there is no Indian problem and no Indian Department."

—Duncan Campbell Scott, Indian Affairs Deputy Superintendent

***Narrator*:** The government of Canada tried in many different ways to assimilate you. For example, in 1969 they introduced The White Paper that tried to get rid of your Indian status, the *Indian Act*, reserve lands and treaties, which were a threat to your rights and identity. Harold Cardinal of the Indian Association of Alberta helped lead the resistance and create what became known as The Red Paper. The Red Paper said that "the only way to maintain Indian culture is to remain as Indians." This was contrary to the goal of the federal government throughout the 20th century. Instead of keeping your culture and identity, you had to become more like the Europeans by giving up your rights, farming, going to school, and praying in church like them.

***European*:** *Place the residential school blanket on the floor at a distance from the others.*

***Narrator*:** The Métis began to organize as a political movement to represent the Métis in Alberta in 1928. This led to the creation of the 8 Métis Settlements now legally established by the province of Alberta. But from the mid-1800s until the 1990s, the federal government took First Nations, Inuit and Métis children from your homes and communities and put them in boarding schools that were run by churches. The official partnership between the federal government and the churches ended in the 1970s, but some churches continued to operate schools until the 1990s. The last residential school to close in Canada was Qu'Appelle School in Saskatchewan in 1996. The last Indian Residential School in Alberta was St Mary's Mission at Standoff and it closed in 1975. Alberta had 25, which was more residential schools than any other province. One of which was in Grouard, where Northland School Division began its roots. Please read scroll 10.

Scroll 10: *Residential Schools.* In the beginning, the authorities believed to achieve assimilation, the bonds between parent and child should be broken. As parents, we didn't have a choice about sending our children to school. Sometimes the police arrived to take away our children. These schools were often very far from our homes and the children had to stay at them all or most of the year. In the vast majority of schools the children were not allowed to speak our languages and they were punished if they did. Often our children weren't given enough food, and they suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

***Narrator*:** Everyone with yellow cards, raise your hands. You must now move to a separate, empty blanket. You represent those who were taken out of your communities and placed in residential schools far from your homes.

***European*:** *Take the children (people with yellow cards) to the residential school blanket.*

***Narrator*:** While some students say they had positive experiences at the schools, most of you say that you suffered from very bad conditions and from different kinds of abuse. Many of you lost family connections and didn't learn your language, culture, and traditions. Because you grew up in the schools and rarely went home, many of you never learned traditional parenting skills, therefore your children were negatively affected. This trauma is called "intergenerational effects" of residential school. More than 3,000 students died from tuberculosis, malnutrition, and other

diseases resulting from poor living conditions while at residential schools. Many were buried on the school grounds, or in unmarked graves, or were never accounted for. Many of you never returned home or had trouble reintegrating if you did. Parents were often not informed if their child was sick, died or ran away from residential school.

***European*:** The person with the yellow index card marked with an "X", please step off the blanket. You represent one of the thousands of children who died at the schools or who died later as a result of your experience.

Pause while this takes place. Next, choose someone else who is not alone on their blanket and ask them to return to their community. Say to them:

Many of you were welcomed back but had difficulty fitting in. Some of you experienced lateral violence when you returned. One person in the community, please turn your back on the person to represent the family ties that were damaged because of intergenerational impacts.

Pause while this takes place.

Everyone else with yellow cards, please find a spot nearby on the floor. You represent those whose connection to your family and community was broken and you never made it home. Some of you ended up in urban centres, others ended up incarcerated due to your experience at residential school.

***Narrator*:** Please be silent for another moment to honour those who died at residential schools or who never made it home because they lost connection to their family and community. Please keep in mind that there are many other students of the residential school system, which were the day students, who suffered many of the same atrocities, but were never recognized or compensated in the same way.

Pause while this takes place.

Please read scroll 11.

Scroll 11: "You have to remember that the Canadian government has done a lot to Aboriginal people that was meant to make us become like Europeans. For example, in residential schools, my grandmother told me you couldn't speak our language or you'd get beaten; you couldn't see your parents—things like that. We didn't have voting rights for a long time. We also lost a lot of our culture."

—Heather, a Cree youth from a community in Saskatchewan

***Narrator*:** Even in the midst of a nation-wide policy of assimilation, there are examples of Indigenous peoples who worked tirelessly to keep their culture and control of their own education. In 1970, members of the Saddle Lake First Nation near St Paul publicly protested the living conditions at the residential school in their community. They peacefully took over the

Blue Quills building and transformed it into the first Indigenous controlled education centre in Canada. This inspired a movement across the country for 'Indian Control of Indian Education'. Thousands of students have graduated from Blue Quills First Nations College which offers post-secondary programs and promotes pride in Indigenous knowledge. In 2015, Blue Quills First Nations College became a University.

Ask the people standing on one blanket to unfold a corner in order to acknowledge First Nations control of local education.

***European*:** Thanks to the courage of survivors, Canadians started to find out about residential schools. Former students negotiated a settlement agreement that included the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In 2008, Prime Minister Harper apologized for the residential schools. Here is an excerpt: "To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions... and we apologize for having done this... Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry."

***Narrator*:** But apologizing means you have to change what you're doing. Many people are still waiting to see if Canada will change how it treats Indigenous children.

The residential schools are not just part of our history. Children and grandchildren of people who went to the schools feel the impact. Many former students are alive today and some have had a chance to tell their story to Canadians through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But Indigenous children are still treated differently. Your schools don't get as much money. Today you are even more likely to be taken from your communities but this time you are being placed in foster care. Please read scroll 12.

Scroll 12: From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of First Nations and Métis children were forced from our homes and adopted or fostered, usually by non-Aboriginal people. This period is known as the 60s scoop. Many of these kids experienced violence, racism, and abuse and lost connection to their identity and culture. Like residential schools, the purpose of the 60s scoop was assimilation.

European *[Go up to someone who is still on their blanket and ask them to find a spot on the floor nearby. Say to them]:* You represent a child apprehended from your community during the 60s scoop. You were not able to reintegrate into your extended family and territory, leaving you with a sense of loss.

Take the dolls away from participants at this time and place them on the blanket with the 60s scoop participant.

Please read scroll 13.

Scroll 13: Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nation had a dream: safe and comfy schools for First Nations children and youth, and classes that respect First Nations cultures. She worked tirelessly to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education and fair funding.

Please read scroll 14.

Scroll 14: Shannen said "I want to tell you what it is like to never have the chance to feel excited about being educated... It's hard to feel pride when our classrooms are cold, the mice run over our lunches, and when you don't have proper resources like libraries and science labs. You know that kids in other communities have proper schools. So you begin to feel as if you are a child who doesn't count for anything... We want our younger brothers and sisters to go to school thinking that school is a time for hopes and dreams of the future. Every kid deserves this."

***Narrator*:** Sadly, Shannen passed away in a car accident when she was 15, but the movement she started lives on. It's called "Shannen's Dream". Please unfold one corner of your blankets and give yourselves a round of applause for the young Indigenous leaders like Shannen who are bringing about positive change.

Others continue to fight for the rights of Indigenous children. Cindy Blackstock, a member of the Gitxsan Nation in British Columbia, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Care Society, and Associate Professor (University of Alberta) launched a human rights complaint in 2007, alleging the government of Canada discriminates against First Nations children by consistently underfunding child welfare on reserve. After a long legal battle through the provincial and federal courts, the Canadian Human Right Tribunal in April 2016, ruled in a landmark decision that the federal government had a longstanding practice of underfunding of child and family services on First Nations reserves and failing to ensure that First Nations children can access government services on the same terms as other Canadian children. The federal government was ordered to cease its discriminatory practice, but has yet to comply with this ruling. Please unfold a corner of your blanket and give a round of applause for Cindy Blackstock, this courageous First Nations scholar and advocate. Please read scroll 15.

Scroll 15: *Broken promises.* Over the years, more than 70 per cent of the land set aside for us in the treaties has been lost or stolen and big companies are allowed to make significant amounts of money from Indigenous lands and natural resources. We, the Indigenous peoples, get little, but are left to clean up the mess and pollution of the companies that don't respect the Earth or future generations.

Please read scroll 16.

Scroll 16: "First Nations are nations. First Nations (treaty people) signed over 300 treaties with the Europeans during the 1700s and 1800s. The treaties agreed to share the lands and resources

with the immigrants…Under existing legislation, treaty people are "sovereign" nations…The Indians surrendered over 9.9 million square kilometers of their land to the immigrants. Today, the sons of the immigrants have the largest treaty rights in Canada. The Indians have become the poorest peoples in Canada."

—Chief Pascall Bighetty, Pukatawagan First Nation

***European*:** One way the Canadian government pressures Indigenous peoples to leave their lands and assimilate is by failing to provide enough funds for basic services:

- According to the O*ffice of the Auditor General, 2011:* Over half the drinking water systems on reserve pose a significant risk to human health.
- According to the *Assembly of First Nations, 2012:* There are 85,000 new housing units needed on reserves and 60 per cent of existing houses are in need of repair.
- According to the *Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011:* Rates of suicide are high in some First Nations communities and are even higher in many Inuit communities. Among First Nations communities, suicide rates are twice the national average, and show no signs of decreasing. Suicide rates among Inuit are even higher than among First Nations, at 6 to 11 times the Canadian average.

Please read scroll 17.

Scroll 17: For many of us, women are the carriers of culture. By targeting women, you target the heart of the nation. Indigenous women have been targeted through federal legislation and policies that try to wear down our communities, and in doing so, make it easier to take our lands. Residential schools have left a legacy of violence that contributes directly to abuse, especially abuse directed at women and children. And in wider society, everyday racism causes wounds that are both visible and invisible.

- According to *Statistics Canada, 2009,* Indigenous women are at least 3.5 times as likely to experience violence as non-Indigenous women in Canada.
- According to a *2014 report by the RCMP*, over 1,000 Indigenous women have gone missing or have been murdered since the 1970s, and these are only the cases that have been documented. The real number is certainly much higher.

***Narrator*:** Gender inequality in the *Indian Act* meant that Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men lost their legal Indian status, but a non-Indigenous woman who married an Indigenous man gained Indian status. Some women who lost their Indian status took their cause for reinstatement to the United Nations and eventually the Supreme Court of Canada. The Court decided against them by one vote, but advised the Canadian Government to correct and change the discriminatory practice. Parliament acted and passed Bill C31 in 1985, which restored status to those who had been forcibly enfranchised but gender discrimination has not been fully removed from the *Indian Act*.

European *[Approach someone (a woman if possible) who is still on the blankets and say to them]:* You represent one of the women stripped of your status because of this gender inequality in the *Indian Act*. As a result, you have had to leave your community, please find a spot nearby on the floor.

Narrator**:** In 2007, a step was taken to improve the way Indigenous peoples are treated. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples became part of international law. This is an agreement among the world's governments that is a minimum standard to make sure Indigenous peoples survive and thrive. Chief Wilton Littlechild from Ermineskin Cree Nation, the first Treaty Indian from Alberta to become a lawyer and former Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, was one of the authors of this document. Canada, however, was one of four countries to object to the Declaration in 2007. (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States). In May 2016, the Government of Canada changed its position and announced in the United Nations Assembly that Canada is now a full supporter of the declaration, without hesitation. Now we need to make sure it's put into action.

Despite the Government of Canada's centuries of efforts to take away your identity, as Indigenous peoples you have continued to resist and to pass down your languages, ceremonies, and much more. Please unfold one small corner of your blankets to honour the people who wrote the Declaration and worked to get it adopted. Give yourselves a round of applause. Please read scroll 18.

Scroll 18: We have language immersion programs and healing initiatives based on our traditional values. Our elders are passing on land-based skills to our youth and mothers and grandmothers are working to address violence in our nations by reinstating ceremonies that honour women. Our leaders are using the courts to have our rights recognized and many of our nations are growing. We see Treaties as living agreements that, if respected, will allow people from all backgrounds to share the land peacefully and respectfully. We are strong and resilient having survived centuries of efforts to make us disappear.

Please read scroll 19.

Scroll 19: "To us the answer is not about incremental change, it is not about just concrete action, it is also repairing the relationship. And the way to repair the relationship between us and Canada is to have this country acknowledge that its richness and its wealth come from their one-sided interpretation of the treaties. There has to be henceforth a double understanding of what those treaties represent."

—Ovide Mercredi, Crown-First Nations Gathering 2012

Narrator**:** In June 2009 the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established and the commissioners were appointed: Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair and Marie Wilson, and Wilton Littlechild. The Commission hosted seven national events across Canada, as well as a Closing Event in Ottawa, with the goals of hearing from former students, engaging the

Canadian public, providing education about the history and legacy of the residential schools system, and sharing and honouring the experiences of former students and their families.

At the Closing Event in June 2015, the TRC released its Executive Summary, which included its findings and 94 Calls to Action aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing the process of reconciliation in Canada.

During the TRC's final event in Ottawa on December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories, and other vital partners to fully implement recommendations of the TRC, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Please unfold a corner of your blanket and applaud the brave actions of the Residential School Survivors and the TRC. Please read scroll 20.

Scroll 20: The role of culture within the reconciliation process, I think, is that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures alike must respect one another in light of their historical experiences—they have to see eye to eye on healing, so to speak. By this, I mean that there needs to be maximized understanding and trust built between the cultures involved.

—David Joanasie, from the Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Inuit Community

Please read scroll 21.

Scroll 21:
Despite direct assimilation attempts
Despite the Residential School Systems
Despite the strong influences of the Church in Métis communities to ignore and deny our Aboriginal heritage
Despite not having a land base
And despite our own diversity in heritage
We are still able to say we are proud to be Métis
We are resilient as a weed, and beautiful as a wildflower
We have much to celebrate and be proud of

—Christi Belcourt, Métis artist

Please read scroll 22.

Scroll 22*:* "Our leaders need to show the way, but no matter how many deals and agreements they make, it is in our daily conversations and interactions that our success as a nation in forging a better place, will ultimately be measured. It is what we say to and about each other in public and in private that we need to look at changing."

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

***Narrator*:** The violence of colonization has left a lot of pain. All across Canada, the relationship between Indigenous people and newcomers is often broken. We don't need more broken promises. We need to repair the relationship and to do this, we need real change.

Ask everyone to look around. At this point, there should be a few people standing on very small areas of blankets and a few more standing in areas where there are no blankets. Ask them to remember what it looked like when they started the exercise and what it looks like now. Ask them to hold these images in their minds. Then invite everyone to take a seat, and continue with a talking circle debrief or discussion.

D. Closing Talking Circle

1. In order to ensure that the end of the Blanket exercise workshop is affirming and uplifting, and that people leave in a good way, it is highly recommended that you hold a talking circle after the exercise to allow participants to share their feelings and ask questions in a respectful way. Please note that this process can take anywhere from 15 minutes to a full hour, so plan your time accordingly.

2. When everyone has taken their seat in the circle, thank the European and all the participants for their cooperation and participation.

3. **Background to Talking Circle.** Talking circles originated with First Nations leaders—the process was used to ensure that all leaders in the tribal council were heard, and that those who were speaking were not interrupted. Usually the Chief would initiate the conversation, with other members responding and sharing their perceptions and opinions of the topic under discussion. The process provides an excellent model for interaction within the learning environment as well. It is also very adaptive to any circle of people who need to discuss topics and make decisions together.

   Several varied objects are used by different First Nations peoples to facilitate the talking circle. Some peoples use a talking stick, others a talking feather, while still others use a peace pipe, a sacred shell, a wampum belt, a stone, or other selected object. The main point of using the sacred object, is that whoever is holding the object in their hand has the right to speak. The circle itself is considered sacred. First Nations people observed that the circle is a dominant symbol in nature and has come to represent wholeness, completion, and the cycles of life (including the cycle of human communication). As well, many talking circles were traditionally "opened" through a prayer and smudging. A sacred space was facilitated by these reverent acts and observances.

4. **General Guidelines**
   - It is respectful to introduce oneself.
   - It is important that the circle of people listens respectfully to the person speaking.
   - The person who is speaking should 'speak from the heart'.
   - Shared communications should be kept in confidence, especially if personal.

5. **Process**
   - What is said in the circle stays in the circle.
   - The circle is extremely respectful of everyone as individuals and what they have to say.
   - The stick is usually passed around the circle in a clockwise direction.
   - Only the person holding the “talking stick” speaks while the others listen.
   - A person talks until they are finished.

- A person may pass the “talking stick” without speaking, if they so wish.
- The talking circle is complete when everyone has had a chance to speak.
- The first time around may be very heavy and if time permits, you may want to go around the Circle again. As the debrief is nearing the end, try to steer the conversation towards hopeful and positive topics such as example of resilience and resistance and next steps that people can take on their journey of healing and reconciliation.
- Drum songs and a prayer from the Elder are often used to close Blanket Exercises. Ensure that the contact information for on-going support services is easily accessible for participants as they leave. Note that by lingering behind you will give people a chance to talk to you one-on-one if needed.

How to Move from Knowledge and Passion to Action, adapted from KAIROS

1. The following ideas are simple ways to start moving all the new knowledge and passion into people's lives so that the seed of change starts. These all happen at the end of the workshop. Invite them to do one of the following:

2. Send a message on social media about one thing they have learned.

3. Send a photo on social media with one sentence about something you have learned.

4. Take out their phones, iPads, or computers and send a text, SMS, or email starting the dialogue with a friend about something you have learned.

5. Take out their phones, iPads, or computers and send a text, SMS, or email to set up an appointment for a lunch conversation with someone.

6. Take out their phone and call their parents or children to ask them for the conversation about something you have learned here today.

7. Write the name of someone in their school on a card that they want to talk to about having a school dialogue on the topic.

8. Write the name of someone they want to meet in the next week that they want to talk to about this topic.

9. Write *one small thing* they can do differently in their everyday life to open their life more to this topic (ie, in relation to the indigenous peoples they see on the street, in relation to what they watch on television, in relation to conversations, etc).

10. Write the title of one resource on a card they want to study in the next week or two.

Appendix A

DIRECTION POSTERS

West

North

East

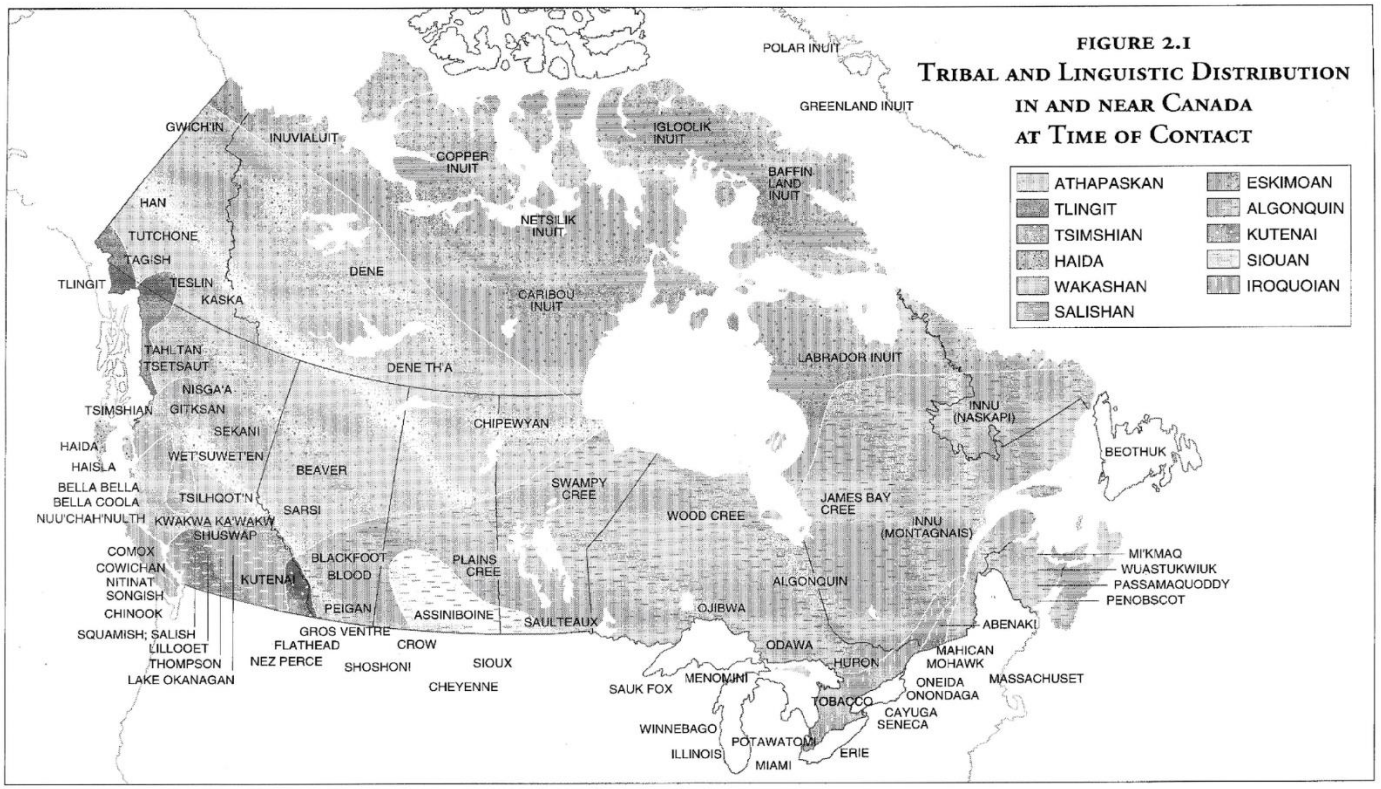
South

Appendix B

MAPS

Turtle Island

Long before the arrival of Europeans, Turtle Island (North America) was home to countless millions of First Nations Peoples, who lived in thousands of distinct societies.



Note: The lines on the map separating the various tribal groups are not precise boundaries. The map provides a general picture of where populations were living at the time of first European contact.

Source: Adapted from Olive P. Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992). Used with the permission of Oxford University Press. Adapted with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the Privy Council Office, 1997, from *Restructuring the Relationship, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*

Treaties
Land reserved for Aboriginal Peoples was steadily whittled away after its original allocation. Almost two-thirds of it has "disappeared" by various means since Confederation. In some cases, the government failed to deliver as much land as specified in a treaty. In other cases, it expropriated or sold reserve land, rarely with First Nations as willing vendors. Once in a while, outright fraud took place. Even when First Nations were able to retain reserve land, the government sometimes sold its resources to outsiders.

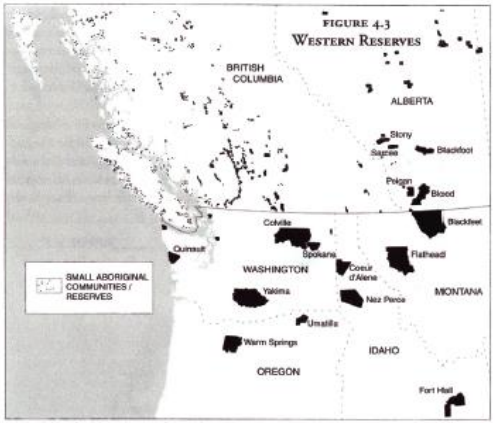
FIGURE 6.1
Historical Indian Treaties

Notes: 1. Treaty boundary lines are approximate.
2. Extension of a treaty boundary as a result of later signatories who adhered to the terms of the original treaty.

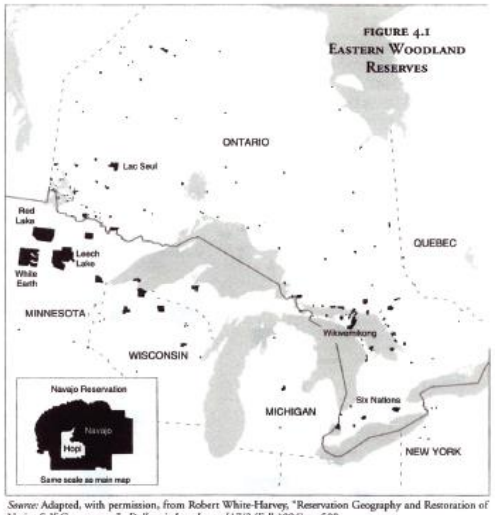
Source: Information taken from the *National Atlas Information Services* map sheet number MCR4162©1991. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada with permission of Natural Resources Canada. Adapted with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the Privy Council Office, 1997, from *Looking Forward, Looking Back, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*

Aboriginal Lands Today

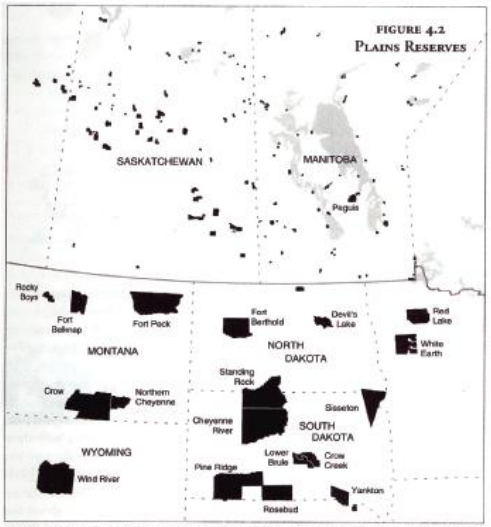
Aboriginal lands south of the 60th parallel - mainly reserves - make up less than one-half of one per cent of the Canadian land mass. By contrast, in the United States (excluding Alaska), where Aboriginal Peoples make up a far smaller portion of the population, they hold three per cent of the land. All of the reserves in every province of Canada combined would not cover one-half of the reservation held by Arizona's Navajo Nation.



Source: Adapted, with permission, from Robert White-Harvey, "Reservation Geography and Restoration of Native Self-Government", *Dalhousie Law Journal* 17/2 (Fall 1994), p. 588.



Source: Adapted, with permission, from Robert White-Harvey, "Reservation Geography and Restoration of Native Self-Government", *Dalhousie Law Journal* 17/2 (Fall 1994), p. 588.



Source: Adapted, with permission, from Robert White-Harvey, "Reservation Geography and Restoration of Native Self-Government", *Dalhousie Law Journal* 17/2 (Fall 1994), p. 588.

Adapted with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the Privy Council Office, 1997, from *Restructuring the Relationship, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*

Appendix C

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Refers to the original peoples of North America who belong to historic, cultural and political entities. Canada's *Constitution Act*, 1982 recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

There are a number of synonyms for Aboriginal peoples, including Indigenous peoples, First Peoples, and original peoples. None of these terms should be used to describe only one or two of the groups.

Because this term used in Canada's constitution, it has specific importance within a Canadian legal context.

ASSIMILATION

The process of absorbing one cultural group into another. This can be pursued through harsh and extreme state policies, such as removing children from their families and placing them in the homes or institutions of another culture. Forcing a people to assimilate through legislation is cultural genocide—the intent is to make a culture disappear.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA ACT

Also known as the *Constitution Act*, 1867 put "Indians and Lands reserved for Indians" under the control of the federal government. When this happened, Indigenous peoples in Canada lost their rights and were no longer recognized as having control over their lands.

COLONIZATION

A process of gaining control of land and resources. It involves one group of people, the colonizers, coming into an area and dominating the people who are already living there.

DISCRIMINATION

When someone is treated negatively because of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc. A person can be discriminated against by an individual or by a whole system. Sometimes discrimination is built into laws and policies in ways that deny fair treatment and services.

TREATIES

Internationally binding agreements between sovereign nations. Hundreds of treaties of peace and friendship were concluded between the European settlers and First Nations during the period prior to confederation.

These treaties promoted peaceful coexistence and the sharing of resources. After Confederation, the European settlers pursued treaty making as a tool to acquire vast tracts of land. The numbered treaties 1 through 11 were concluded between First Nations and the Crown, after Confederation.

For Indigenous peoples, treaties outline the rights and responsibilities of all parties to the agreement. In the traditions of Indigenous treaty making, these are oral agreements. In addition, they are "vital, living instruments of relationship" (RCAP) that involve all Canadians.

EQUITY

The principle of justice and fair process that leads to an equal outcome and recognizing that not everyone has the same needs. It takes into account the injustices of the past and how they have placed some in positions of privilege while others face significant barriers to achieving well-being.

Can be confused with equality but equality means each person gets the same treatment or the same amount of something. It involves systematically dividing something into equal parts.

FIRST NATIONS

Is not a legal term but replaces "Indian" in common usage. A term used by the Assembly of First Nations to refer to their membership. In 1980, all the chiefs in Canada adopted a declaration to call their members nations (the Cree, the Mohawk, the Blackfoot, the Dene, etc) the term because they did not like the terms *Indian Band* and *Indian Tribe*. The term is also used to reinforce the idea that Aboriginal people were the original inhabitants of the Americas.

INDIAN ACT

In 1876 all the laws dealing with Indigenous peoples in Canada were gathered together and put into one federal government *Act.* The Canadian government used this legislation to attack the identity of Indigenous peoples. It limited hunting and fishing and made spiritual ceremonies like the potlatch, pow-wow, and Sundance against the law. This didn't change until the 1950s. To this day, the *Act* controls many aspects of Indigenous peoples' lives.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Refers to the original people in any region of the planet. This inclusive term is usually used to refer to Aboriginal peoples in an international context. When we speak of peoples, as opposed to people, it is a recognition of collective rights; that each Indigenous group is a distinct entity with its own cultural and political rights.

Indigenous peoples all over the world have the common experience of being the original inhabitants of a territory and being oppressed by ethnic groups that arrived later. Indigenous peoples also share a set of international rights which are a minimum standard to ensure they survive and thrive.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

When an individual or a group of people experience violence, abuse, or some other form of trauma, the negative impacts of these experiences are felt by their children and grandchildren. The trauma inherited by future generations can show itself in many ways including destructive behaviour and health problems.

INTERNAL COLONIZATION

When you live in a place that has been colonized, whether you are the original people or a settler who has come from away, you gradually absorb the colonizers ways of acting and thinking. That is why we talk about needing to "decolonize ourselves" so that all citizens can change our behaviour.

INUIT

Refers to the Aboriginal peoples who generally live north of the treeline in Canada, near Canada's Arctic coast (as well as the Native people of Greenland). The Inuit consider the land, water, and ice of their homeland to be integral to their culture and way of life. They were formerly called Eskimo, which the Inuit consider a derogatory term.

There are four Inuit regions in Canada: Nunavut, Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories), Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Labrador). Many Inuit also live in southern Canadian cities. In 2015 there were 1,985 Inuit living in Alberta

MÉTIS PEOPLE

The term for a person who self-identifies as a person of mixed-blood descendants of Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine women and French and Scottish fur traders and other early settlers. Métis society and culture were established before European settlement was entrenched in Canada. The Métis Nation is one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as defined in the *Constitution Act*, 1982.

RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

These rights have been recognized at the international level in various ways but most importantly in the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The *Declaration* was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Because it considers "reconciliation" to be an "ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission believes that the UN *Declaration* is "the appropriate framework for reconciliation." Indigenous peoples around the world continue to have to fight to have even their basic human rights respected.

TERRA NULLIUS

Latin for "lands belonging to no one". This idea meant European countries could send out explorers and when they found land, they could claim it for their nation. These were lands being used by Indigenous peoples. After a while, terra nullius also came to mean land not being used by "civilized" people and land not being put to "civilized" use.

THE 60'S SCOOP

From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of First Nations and Métis children were forced illegally by the provincial governments from their homes and adopted or fostered, usually by non-Indigenous people. Many of these kids experienced violence, racism and abuse, and lost connection to their identity and culture. Like residential schools, the purpose was assimilation. The term was used by a social worker from British Columbia where she disclosed "with tears in her eyes—that it was common practice in BC in the mid-sixties to 'scoop' from their mothers on reserves almost all newly born children. She was crying because she realized—20 years later—what a mistake that had been".

DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

In what we now call North America, Europeans made deals amongst themselves and divided up control over Indigenous peoples and Indigenous lands. Usually, whichever European nation discovered the land first took control, with the blessing of the Christian church.

Appendix D

SCROLLS

The 22 participant scrolls are attached.

Scroll 1

"One of my favourite things about my culture is how we're taught that everything on the Earth is to be respected. It's an important part of the culture and covers everything. That includes respecting yourself. Respecting yourself is one of the most important things my culture has taught me. Also, the land, water, plants, air and animals are all very important to our culture and need to be respected. Without any of it, what would we be?"

—Kateri, a Mohawk youth from a community in Quebec

Scroll 2

"At contact with Europeans, each of the hundreds of Indigenous Peoples of Indigenous America possessed all the elements of nationhood that were well-established by European settlers: territory, governing structures, legal systems and a historical continuity with our territories. Nothing since the arrival of Columbus has occurred to merit any reduction in the international legal status of Indigenous Peoples. The recognition of Indigenous Nations and our rights pose no threat to non-Indigenous Peoples."

—Sharon Venne, Cree

Scroll 3

"Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created."

—Georges Erasmus, Dene Nation, co-chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Scroll 4

Terra Nullius (TER-ah NOO-lee-us)

The idea of Terra Nullius, which in Latin means "land belonging to no-one", meant European countries could send out explorers and when they found land, they could claim it for their nation. These were often lands we were using.

Scroll 5

The BNA (British North America) Act.

The BNA Act, also known as the Constitution Act, 1867, put "Indians and Lands reserved for Indians" under the control of the federal government. When this happened, we lost our rights and control over our lands.

Scroll 6

Indian Act.

In 1876 all the laws dealing with us were gathered together and put into the Indian Act. The Indian Act completely changed our lives. As long as our cultures were strong it was difficult for the government to take our lands so the government used the Indian Act to attack who we were as peoples. Hunting and fishing were now limited and our spiritual ceremonies like the potlatch, pow-wow and sundance were now against the law. This didn't change until the 1950s.

Scroll 7

"I know what the government did in the past; they said where we had to live. I know that we're not treated equally now, because I can feel it. We're all Canadians and we should all be treated equally."

—Cassie, a Mi'kmaq (mick-mack) youth from a community in Nova Scotia

Scroll 8

Enfranchisement (en-fran-CHISE-ment).

Under this federal government policy, all First Nations people who became doctors, teachers, lawyers, soldiers or who went to university lost their legal Indian status. This was called being granted "enfranchisement".

Scroll 9

Assimilation (ah-sim-ill-EH-shun).

The government thought the "Indian problem" would solve itself as more and more Indigenous people died from diseases and others became part of the larger Canadian society. As one government employee said, the government's goal was "to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and that there is no Indian problem and no Indian Department."

—Indian Affairs deputy superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott

Scroll 10

Residential Schools.

In the beginning, the authorities believed to achieve assimilation, the bonds between parent and child should be broken. As parents, we didn't have a choice about sending our children to school. Sometimes the police arrived to take away our children. These schools were often very far from our homes and the children had to stay at them all or most of the year. In the vast majority of schools the children were not allowed to speak our languages and they were punished if they did. Often our children weren't given enough food, and they suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Scroll 11

"You have to remember that the Canadian government has done a lot to Aboriginal people that was meant to make us become like Europeans. For example, in residential schools, my grandmother told me you couldn't speak our language or you'd get beaten; you couldn't see your parents – things like that. We didn't have voting rights for a long time. We also lost a lot of our culture."

—Heather, a Cree youth from a community in Saskatchewan

Scroll 12

From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of First Nations and Métis children were forced illegally from our homes and adopted or fostered, usually by non-Aboriginal people. This period is known as the 60s scoop. Many of these kids experienced violence, racism and abuse and lost connection to their identity and culture. Like residential schools, the purpose of the 60s scoop was assimilation.

Scroll 13

Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nation had a dream: safe and comfy schools for First Nations children and youth, and classes that respect First Nations cultures. She worked tirelessly to try to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education and fair funding.

Scroll 14

Shannen said "I want to tell you what it is like to never have the chance to feel excited about being educated....It's hard to feel pride when our classrooms are cold, and the mice run over our lunches and when you don't have proper resources like libraries and science labs. You know that kids in other communities have proper schools. So you begin to feel as if you are a child who doesn't count for anything... We want our younger brothers and sisters to go to school thinking that school is a time for hopes and dreams of the future. Every kid deserves this."

Scroll 15

Broken promises.

Over the years, more than 70 per cent of the land set aside for us in the treaties has been lost or stolen and big companies are allowed to make significant amounts of money from Indigenous lands and natural resources. We, the Indigenous peoples, get little, but are left to clean up the mess and pollution of the companies that don't respect the Earth or future generations.

Scroll 16

"First Nations are nations. First Nations (treaty people) signed over 300 treaties with the Europeans during the 1700s and 1800s. The treaties agreed to share the lands and resources with the immigrants. … Under existing legislation, treaty people are "sovereign" nations. … The Indians surrendered over 9.9 million square kilometres of their land to the immigrants. Today, the sons of the immigrants have the largest treaty rights in Canada. The Indians have become the poorest peoples in Canada."

*—Chief Pascall Bighetty, Pukatawagan [Pu-ka-ta-**wa**-gan] First Nation*

Scroll 17

For many of us, women are the carriers of culture. By targeting women, you target the heart of the nation. Indigenous women have been targeted through federal legislation and policies that try to wear down our communities, and in doing so, make it easier to take our lands. Residential schools have left a legacy of violence that contributes directly to abuse, especially abuse directed at women and children. And in wider society, everyday racism causes wounds that are both visible and invisible.

- *According to Statistics Canada, 2009, Indigenous women are at least 3.5 times as likely to experience violence as non-Indigenous women in Canada.*
- *According to a 2014 report by the RCMP, over 1,000 Indigenous women have gone missing or have been murdered since the 1970s, and these are only the cases that have been documented. The real number is certainly much higher.*

Scroll 18

We have language immersion programs and healing initiatives based on our traditional values. Our elders are passing on land-based skills to our youth and mothers and grandmothers are working to address violence in our nations by reinstating ceremonies that honour women. Our leaders are using the courts to have our rights recognized and many of our nations are growing. We see treaties as living agreements that, if respected, will allow people from all backgrounds to share the land peacefully and respectfully. We are strong and resilient having survived centuries of efforts to make us disappear.

Scroll 19

"To us the answer is not about incremental change, it is not about just concrete action, it is also repairing the relationship. And the way to repair the relationship between us and Canada is to have this country acknowledge that its richness and its wealth come from their one-sided interpretation of the treaties. There has to be henceforth a double understanding of what those treaties represent."

—Ovide Mercredi, Crown-First Nations Gathering 2012

Scroll 20

"The role of culture within the reconciliation process, I think, is that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures alike must respect one another in light of their historical experiences—they have to see eye to eye on healing, so to speak. By this, I mean that there needs to be maximized understanding and trust built between the cultures involved."

—David Joanasie, from the Kinngait (Cape Dorset) Inuit Community

Scroll 21

Despite direct assimilation attempts
Despite the Residential School Systems
Despite the strong influences of the Church in Métis communities to ignore and deny
our Aboriginal heritage
Despite not having a land base
And despite our own diversity in heritage
We are still able to say we are proud to be Métis
We are resilient as a weed, and beautiful as a wildflower
We have much to celebrate and be proud of.

—Christi Belcourt, Métis artist

Scroll 22

"Our leaders need to show the way, but no matter how many deals and agreements they make, it is in our daily conversations and interactions that our success as a nation in forging a better place, will ultimately be measured. It is what we say to and about each other in public and in private that we need to look at changing."

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

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