

INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES

A Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66

JUNE 2018

INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES

Indigenous Youth Voices Advisors

ANDRÉ BEAR
GABRIELLE FAYANT
MAATALII ANERAQ OKALIK

Citation

Indigenous Youth Voices. (2018). *A Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66*. Ottawa, Canada

Electronic ISBN

9781550146585

Paper ISBN

9781550146592

WEBSITE

www.indigenouslyouthvoices.com

INSTAGRAM

[@indigenouslyouthvoices](https://www.instagram.com/indigenouslyouthvoices)

FACEBOOK

www.fb.com/indigyouthvoices

TWITTER

[@indigyouthvoice](https://twitter.com/indigyouthvoice)

Kitinanaskimotin / Qujannamiik / Marcee / Miigwech:

To all the Indigenous youth and organizations who took the time to share their ideas, experiences, and perspectives with us.

To Assembly of Se7en Generations (A7G) who provided administrative and capacity support.

To the Elders, mentors, friends and family who supported us on this journey.

To the Indigenous Youth Voices team members who contributed greatly to this Roadmap:

THEA BELANGER
Anishinabe/Maliseet

MARISSA MILLS
Southern Tuschonne/Michif

ERIN DONNELLY
Haida

NATHALIA PIU OKALIK
Inuk

LINDSAY DUPRÉ
Michif

CHARLOTTE QAMANIQ-MASON
Inuk

WILL LANDON
Anishinabe

CAITLIN TOLLEY
Algonquin

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to recognize and honour all of the generations of Indigenous youth who have come before us and especially those, who under extreme duress in the Residential School system, did what they could to preserve their language and culture.

The voices of Indigenous youth captured throughout this Roadmap echo generations of Indigenous youth before who have spoken out similarly in hopes of a better future for our peoples.

Change has not yet happened. We offer this Roadmap to once again, clearly and explicitly show that Indigenous youth are the experts of our own lives, capable of voicing our concerns, understanding our needs and leading change.

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

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA:
CALL TO ACTION #66 (2015)**

“We have the weight of the traumas of the generation that came before us. We are a bridge generation to open the door for the ones that are coming so that they don’t have to struggle to survive by fighting; they can grow up with their culture and choose who they want to be without this fight.”

**PARTICIPANT, INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES
NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING (2017)**

Table of Contents

p10

Foreword

From the Indigenous Youth
Voices Advisors

p12

01. How We Got Here

The Context of the Roadmap

- 1.1 About Indigenous Youth Voices 12
- 1.2 The Vision, Mission, and Values of
Indigenous Youth Voices 13
- 1.3 Organization of this Roadmap 15

p20

02. Listening and Learning

Information Sources for the Roadmap

- 2.1 Research Approach 20
- 2.2 Multi-Method Data Collection 21
 - a. Community Dialogue with
Indigenous Organizations
and Leaders 21
 - b. Online Survey of Indigenous Youth 22
 - c. National Youth Gathering of
Indigenous Youth Leaders 22
 - d. Review and Summary of Relevant
Past Work and Research 26

p28

03. What We Have Learned

An Overview of Key Findings

3.1 Reflections on Community Strengths and Challenges	28
3.2 What Does Reconciliation Mean to Indigenous Youth? Five Key Themes	37
Theme 1: Acknowledging the Past	39
Theme 2: Healing	41
Theme 3: Improving Relations	41
Theme 4: Treaty and Land Rights	42
Theme 5: Equity	42
3.3 Summary of Relevant Past Work and Research	44

p64

05. Closing Thoughts

Fears, Hopes, Responsibility

a. Limitations and Opportunities	65
b. Fear and Responsibility	66
c. Moving Forward with Hope and Urgency	67

p50

04. Requirements

Moving the TRC Call To Action #66 Forward

4.1 Indigenous Youth Voices: as a National Non-Profit	50
a. Introduction	50
b. Overview of Proposed Activities	54
c. Immediate Next Steps	56
d. Ongoing Requirements of the Federal Government	57
4.2 Reconciliation & Indigenous Youth Voices Network	58
a. Why an Indigenous Youth Voices Network?	58
b. Proposed Values and Principles	58
c. How will the Network Operate?	59
4.3 Reconciliation & Program Areas of Multi-Year Funding for Indigenous Youth	59

p71

06. Appendices

“As independent advisors who do not represent the Crown and are not representatives of our Nations, we are eager to gain direction from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth and Indigenous organizations to amplify their voices and build a national platform from their vision. We honour those who contributed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and accept the task to table a roadmap and recommendations on how Indigenous youth want Call to Action #66 implemented in their communities.”

**ANDRÉ BEAR, GABRIELLE FAYANT, AND MAATALII OKALIK
ADVISORS TO THE MINISTER OF CROWN-INDIGENOUS
RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

“I am so proud that these three inspiring young leaders have agreed to design and execute a process to seek advice and knowledge from their peers, from coast to coast to coast, in response to Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #66. I know they will be asking tough questions, listening, and will provide concrete recommendations on how to build and fund a network of Indigenous youth and community-based youth organizations, that will be able to deliver programs on reconciliation while sharing information, wisdom, and promising practices. André, Maatalii, and Gabrielle are truly impressive advocates and role-models for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth. Their work will be transformative.”

**THE HONOURABLE CAROLYN BENNETT, M.D., P.C., M.P.
MINISTER OF CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

Foreword

FROM THE INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES ADVISORS

THE JOURNEY OF THIS *Roadmap to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66* began on November 30th of 2016, when the Honourable Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, appointed us – André Bear, Gabrielle Fayant, and Maatalii Okalik – to establish a Voices of Indigenous Youth Council to provide recommendations on how to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Call to Action #66 that directs:

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

We agreed to meet with the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to discuss how to move forward as three advisors to connect with Indigenous youth from across Canada for support and advice on how to implement the TRC Call to Action #66.

Of utmost importance to us was our commitment to gather input through a process that was as inclusive as possible, amplifying Indigenous youth voices in an authentic way that respects the roles of currently elected Indigenous youth leaders.

And so, we began the development of a national network of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth leaders, organizations, movements, and grassroots initiatives called Indigenous Youth Voices. What began as a request for an Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Youth Council by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada became something much greater – an opportunity for Indigenous youth to build something that is uniquely Indigenous with the support of the Government of Canada, a first in Canadian history.

Over a short period of time, Indigenous Youth Voices has met a considerable number of Indigenous youth leaders, organizations, groups, and Councils from across the country. We also launched a survey that over 500 Indigenous youth responded to and extensively researched current and past reports pertaining to Indigenous youth in Canada. In December of 2017, Indigenous Youth Voices held a National Gathering, where over 20 Indigenous youth came to Ottawa to discuss the future of the TRC Call to Action #66, and a way forward with Indigenous Youth Voices. Youth decided that instead of a final report, IYV should first develop and submit to the Government of Canada



Appointed Indigenous Youth Voices Advisors, Maatalii Aneraq Okalik, Gabrielle Fayant and André Bear

a roadmap and requirements document, outlining a framework to build the foundation for Call to Action #66 to be implemented by Indigenous youth themselves.

This roadmap and accompanying requirements shares some of what we have learned from these community dialogues, survey responses, and review of existing literature. We submit this roadmap and requirements, guided by Indigenous youth with the spirit of truth and reconciliation, as the report requested by Hon. Minister Bennett.

But the journey must continue.

Indigenous Youth Voices must continue to connect Indigenous youth leaders from across the country, sharing information and best practices on what is working for Indigenous youth, the realities of Indigenous youth, and, most importantly, their solutions to advance the TRC Call to Action #66.

This work needs to happen alongside Indigenous youth from across the country, to complete a detailed roadmap that speaks to the needs of Indigenous youth in Canada, and the implementation of Call to Action #66.

We are deeply grateful to all the Indigenous youth who engaged with us and participated in the shaping of this roadmap: all the Indigenous youth leaders, as well as the over 500 Indigenous youth from across the country who

completed the survey. We also acknowledge and thank all the Indigenous organizations that met with us and provided advice and strength.

Finally, we thank Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX), a provincial initiative supporting grassroots youth organizations with research and evaluation based out of York University, for their support under the direction of the three Advisors.

- André Bear, Gabrielle Fayant, and Maatalii Okalik

Advisors to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

01.

How We Got Here

THE CONTEXT OF THE ROADMAP

- 1.1 About Indigenous Youth Voices
- 1.2 The Vision, Mission, and Values of Indigenous Youth Voices
- 1.3 Organization of this Roadmap

“Our realities are important, and despite being the most vulnerable people in this country we are also the fastest growing demographic in Canada. Our priorities matter. Our solutions matter.”

1.1. About Indigenous Youth Voices

IN DECEMBER 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released 94 Calls to Action — clear directives addressing the lasting intergenerational trauma of residential schools that Indigenous Peoples across Canada continue to experience. Call to Action #66

specifically refers to Indigenous youth programming and the establishment of a national youth network:

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

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, publicly announced the appointment of three independent Indigenous youth advisors – André Bear, Gabrielle Fayant, and Maatalii Okalik – in August 2017 to gather insight, ideas, and feedback from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth across Canada on the implementation of the TRC Call to Action #66.

This request has since been reconceptualized into Indigenous Youth Voices (IYV), an opportunity for Indigenous youth to create a movement and build a collective foundation on which to advocate for our rights, well-being, and people, on our own terms. Through the development of the roadmap and requirements, we have endeavoured to connect with Indigenous youth leaders from across the country to share information and learn about what is working for Indigenous youth, their realities across the country and, most importantly, their solutions to advance the TRC Call to Action #66.



Appointed Indigenous Youth Voices Advisors Gabrielle Fayant and André Bear holding the Métis Settlement Flag during a community visit.

1.2 The Vision, Mission, and Values of Indigenous Youth Voices

Vision

We envision a future where all Indigenous youth have our basic needs met and opportunities to thrive in all aspects of our lives. We envision a future where we have a strong sense of belonging and purpose in contributing to the wellness of our communities and can live exerting our treaty and inherent rights and responsibilities as the original peoples rooted in our languages and cultures on our traditional territories in Canada.

Mission Statement

Indigenous Youth Voices is a network connecting Indigenous youth leaders, organizations, groups, and grassroots initiatives to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66. This includes building capacity at the community level to meet Indigenous youth needs and providing oversight to government on how to provide multi-year funding to these communities more effectively and equitably.

As a national network, IYV seeks to advocate for Indigenous youth priorities on the terms and standards that Indigenous youth set for ourselves. Our aim is to provide a space and platform to advocate for the well-being of Indigenous youth across Canada, representing both unity across all Indigenous youth who deserve to thrive in an equitable and just Canada, while also advocating for the distinct needs and different contexts of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth.

Values

As Advisors, we identified words and phrases that represent Indigenous Youth Voices’ core values. Each person coming into the initiative was asked to review, agree on the values, and carry out the work with these values as their guide:

- Strengths-based and Solution-based
- Amplifying the voices of Indigenous youth 30 and under
- Non-partisan
- Non-representative
- Honour
- Open Mind
- Open Heart
- Transparent
- Inclusive
- Solidarity
- Truth
- Spiritual Laws
- Indigenous Knowledge
- Indigenous Languages
- Ceremony

We want to unite the voices of Indigenous youth across Canada and maintain our independence, freedom, and unification as young people.

What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The commission spent six years travelling around Canada to hear directly from Indigenous people who had been taken and forcibly placed in residential schools. Its mandate was to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools by documenting the stories and truths of survivors, families, communities, and anyone affected by the Indian Residential Schools experience.¹ The commission released its full report in 2015, which also included 94 Calls to Action. It is important to note that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples all attended Residential Schools and suffered the attempts of genocide.

Our focus throughout has been on connecting with as many Indigenous youth as possible: those engaged with initiatives involving or affecting Indigenous youth and those who did not necessarily have initiatives they were engaged in or had access to, but whose valuable life experience provided valuable insight into recommendations to TRC Call to Action #66. Our aim was to connect these existing visions and amplify the perspectives and priorities they represent. We know that Indigenous youth have very different perspectives on what the term reconciliation means and what related youth programming should look like. As such, we want to ensure that the needs of Indigenous youth are met through programs and processes that are determined by Indigenous youth in their communities.

THE FINDINGS AND REQUIREMENTS for moving forward in this Roadmap reflect a broad overview of the data we have collected. We have focused on select

aspects of the survey and the conversations we held in Indigenous communities and spaces and at our National Youth Gathering. While our aim was to be as inclusive as possible, we want to emphasize that this is just the beginning.

What we offer here is a contribution to the work of Indigenous youth advocates across Canada, within the unique and urgent context of the TRC Call to Action #66.

We know there are many more people, advocates, and initiatives out there working tirelessly with and for Indigenous youth. We hope that continued development and implementation of TRC Call to Action #66 will allow for future opportunities for us to further engage with these organizations and individuals.

What are the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action?

Because the lasting intergenerational trauma of residential schools continues to negatively impact Indigenous Peoples in many ways, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) developed 94 Calls to Action based on their findings and research. The Calls to Action provide clear direction on how all levels of government – federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous – can work together to address the challenges Indigenous communities now face due to residential schools and colonialism. The TRC Calls to Action are divided into two parts, Legacy (1-42) and Reconciliation (43-94), and cover issues and challenges related to child welfare, education, justice, language and culture, equity, professional development, youth programs, and more.

1.3 Organization of A Roadmap To TRC #66

Section 1 of *A Roadmap to the TRC Call to Action #66* provides an overview of the background and context of Indigenous Youth Voices and the framing question for the roadmap.

Section 2, *Listening and Learning - Information Sources for the Roadmap*, describes our research methodology, including our approach to this research and the multi-method data collection that we undertook: Community Dialogue Sessions; Online Survey of Indigenous Youth; National Gathering of Indigenous Youth Leaders; Review of Past Work and Research Relevant to Indigenous Youth.

Section 3 on *What We Have Learned* summarizes the key learnings from our research that inform the requirements that we have outlined for the TRC Call to Action #66 in Section 4, *Requirements for the TRC Call to Action #66*.

We conclude with what we heard from Indigenous youth across Canada in the final section, *Fears, Hopes, and Responsibility*.

¹ <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=10>

DEFINITIONS

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Youth

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth all have very distinct histories that ground their current realities – and, even then, these are just three very broad categorizations, each of which includes many different groups with unique contexts, ways of being, and experiences. Here we share some short and general descriptions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis identities:

First Nations

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 there were 859,970 people in Canada who identified as First Nations, making up approximately 61% of the Indigenous population. There are 634 First Nations communities and 3,100 reserves with immense diversity in languages (over 50 distinct Indigenous languages), cultures, and historic and contemporary realities. Between 2006 and 2011, the First Nations population increased by 23%, with the median age being 25.8 years, and 49% of First Nations people being under the age of 25.

First Nations, or the first peoples of Turtle Island, refers to the many sovereign Indigenous nations located in Canada who are neither Inuit or Métis. First Nations peoples across Turtle Island hold a variety of complex traditional governing systems that predate Canada and overall contact with British and French settlers. The term First Nation emerged during the 1980s to replace the term “Indian”; “First Nations” also came to replace the term “band.”

Status and Non-Status

Enacted in 1876, the Indian Act defines how the federal government administers “Indian status.” First Nations peoples who have this status conferred on them become eligible for a range of benefits, rights, programs, and services offered by federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The names of “Status Indians” are recorded on the Indian Register, a list maintained by the federal government to this day.

There are wide-ranging implications for First Nations peoples deemed ineligible for status, as they are not legally recognized as First Nations peoples by the Canadian government. Non-status First Nations face the challenges of being legislated out of their communities, unable to participate in band politics, and ineligible for the same rights and various types of government supports offered to those with status.

Status and non-status First Nations share many common concerns, including displacement from their ancestral homelands and their traditional ways of life, socio-economic challenges, and a desire to practice their own cultures and traditions and to determine their own identities and futures. However, many non-status First Nations face challenges in finding forums in which these concerns can be addressed, as the Canadian government claims it is not responsible for non-status First Nations.

The Indian Act’s treatment of “status” has created false notions of authenticity – the misconception that a non-status First Nations person is less Indigenous or an inauthentic Indigenous person.² Non-status First Nations who identify themselves as Indigenous, with ties to their ancestral homelands, cultures, and histories, may find themselves excluded from land claims, treaties, and other similar agreements. Many feel that they remain an invisible, and therefore excluded, demographic.

² Learn more about Indian status:
http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/indian_status

Inuit

Inuit are from Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homeland) and have taken care of Inuit Nunangat for thousands of years. Formerly known as Eskimos, Inuit are proud to have a deep connection with the land, ice, and water, and all that comes from their homeland. As a hunting people, Inuit continue to depend on the health of their land and environment, and the animals they harvest and thrive off of. Inuit have unique traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. The Inuit language, Inuktitut, is a descriptive one that is strong with unique dialects that span Inuit Nunangat. The population of Inuit in Canada is approximately 60,000; Inuit also have relations in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Chakotka (Russia), and Alaska (United States).

In the 1950s, due to international conflict, Inuit suddenly became a priority for the federal government. To assert Canadian sovereignty in what continues to be Inuit Nunangat,³ the Government of Canada made Inuit citizens of Canada, and relocated Inuit to the northern communities that are represented on maps of Canada today. Inuit sled dogs were slaughtered and the family allowance was introduced, presumably to create an Inuit dependence on the cash economy. Conscription to Residential Schools was enforced and Inuit children were removed from their parents, preventing Inuit language, culture, and traditions from being celebrated on a daily basis by families and communities.

With this attempt at obliterating their self-determination, and with the pressure of resource development on Inuit Nunangat, Inuit negotiated five modern land claims with the Government of Canada to assert rights to sovereignty and governance over Inuit lands. Each Inuit region in Canada has organizations responsible for their land claim(s) implementation. This includes the Nunatsiavut Government (Nunatsiavut, Northern Labrador), Makivik Corporation (Nunavik, Northern Quebec), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (Nunavut), and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories). On a number of occasions across all Land Claims Agreements, Canada has not fulfilled its required responsibilities outlined in these Agreements, further disadvantaging Inuit social and economic realities.⁴

Just two generations after forced relocation, the majority of today's Inuit live in 53 communities spread across Inuit Nunangat. This encompasses roughly 35% of Canada's land mass and 50% of its coastline. Approximately 27% of Inuit currently live outside of Inuit Nunangat, and are concentrated in a minimum of 11 urban centres. Fifty-four percent of Inuit are under the age of 25, and the median age is 22.8 years (compare that to the average age of Canadians: 40.6-years-old). Between 2006 and 2011, the Inuit population grew by 18%, and the leading cause of death of Inuit (who have a life expectancy that is 10 years less than the average Canadian) is suicide. Along with the social and economic inequities, suicide is an epidemic among Inuit in Canada, with the suicide rate among the highest in the world.

Other statistics about Inuit include that they are skilled hunters who provide for their families and communities healthy food harvested from their homeland, are exceptional seamstresses, have the highest ratio of artists per capita and despite a decline in Inuit language fluency, a particular reality amongst Inuit youth, a strong connection to their mother tongue with the desire to strengthen it.

At the last National Inuit Youth Summit hosted by the National Inuit Youth Council, over 100 Inuit youth from across Inuit Nunangat identified Inuit language (Inuktitut), reconciliation, suicide prevention, Inuit culture and Inuit practices, education and empowerment as their priorities.

Connecting Widespread Communities

All 53 Inuit communities require air service to travel in and out of. Community-based youth programming for Inuit youth specific to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #66 would need to reflect Inuit geographic realities and must be injected into all 53 Inuit communities. To ensure long-term and sustainable reconciliation, the investment of multi-year funding for community-based programming in the Inuit context would require a distinct-based approach specific to Inuit peoples, and will require investment in all 53 communities in Inuit Nunangat, as well as into urban centres where Inuit reside.

³ Please see Appendix D: Inuit Nunangat Map

⁴ Please see Appendix E: Social and Economic Inequities

Métis⁵

Within Canada, there remains significant misinformation and confusion about who the Métis are. Contrary to popular notions, not all individuals of mixed European-First Nations ancestry are, in fact, Métis (as recognized within S. 35 of Canada's Constitution). Rather, the Métis in Canada are recognized as a distinct Indigenous peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, languages, way of life, and socio-political identity, separate from their First Nations, Inuit, or European forebears.

Historic, rights-bearing Métis communities formed throughout the Upper Great Lakes, across the Plains, and into north-eastern British Columbia, as well as in the Northwest Territories, in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Through kinship and political ties, these distinct communities collectively formed the Métis Nation and occupied a territory that is now known as the Historic Métis Homeland. Due to the effects of racist colonial attitudes and policies — including violence at the hands of settlers, flooded and burned out Métis villages, mandatory attendance of Métis children at Residential and Day Schools, discriminatory child welfare practices, and food insecurity — many Métis were forced to integrate into non-Indigenous communities and/or relocate to outside of the Métis Homeland. As Treaties in Western Canada were controversially signed, in what many now refer to as the number treaties or post-Confederation treaties, the Halfbreed Commissions were also taking place. This process was intended to transfer land or money in exchange for inherent Indigenous rights, also known as Halfbreed or Métis Scrips. This process still continues to be a hidden part of Canadian history, and therefore continues to be a part of the reason of confusion about Métis identity by Canadians.⁶

Over the last century, despite the displacement and diaspora of many Metis, the Métis Nation has begun to re-assert its rights to self-governance, self-determination, and equitable relations with the Government of Canada. Contemporary Métis communities have coalesced throughout much of the Historic Métis Homeland,

as well as in a number of urban centres outside of the Homeland. These communities have established Métis governments at the local, regional, and national levels. Many also have strong, democratically-elected Youth Councils who represent thousands of Métis youth within their jurisdictions.

There remains eight legislated, land-based Metis Settlements in Alberta that have struggled to protect their land-base and face first hand the continued impacts of colonization for example gang violence, poverty, to lack of clean water and housing, to name a few. It is important to acknowledge and recognize the diverse living conditions and barriers of Metis youth today. Many Métis survivors and families of survivors have yet to tell their truths regarding their experience at Day Schools and/or Industrial Schools, which were very similar to Residential Schools. Additionally, governments at all levels have historically refused to recognize the Métis as distinct Indigenous peoples and have perennially denied their responsibility to equitably support the social, educational, health, and cultural needs of the Métis in Canada.

Fully understanding their Métis identity is still a challenge for many Métis youth, and many do not have opportunities to access culture, land-based learning, knowledge holders, and language resources.

⁵ This content was written with additional support from Paul Robitaille and Mitch Case, Métis Nation of Ontario, Cassidy Caron, Métis Nation of British Columbia, Tyler Thomas, Manitoba Métis Federation, and Skye Durocher, Fishing Lake Métis Settlement

⁶ http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_scrip

“I didn’t know that my mother went to Residential School until I was 19. She kept it from me for so long, but when she finally shared her story, she began to heal and so did her family. She passed down a lot of trauma to her three children, one of whom has passed because of alcoholism.

She is living, breathing proof that once we begin to share, we begin to heal. This is why I picture having welcoming circles for mothers and their daughters. Why men need mentorship programs for Elders to pass their knowledge on with pride and for the young to gather responsibilities and grow up with purpose, instead of being lost and more likely to die by suicide.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

02.

Listening and Learning

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR THE ROADMAP

2.1 Research Approach

2.2 Multi-Method Data Collection

- a. Community Dialogue with Indigenous Organizations and Leaders
- b. Online Survey of Indigenous Youth
- c. National Youth Gathering of Indigenous Youth Leaders
- d. Review and Summary of Relevant Past Work and Research

We were interested in understanding the perspectives of Indigenous youth on the current priority areas/needs of Indigenous youth; what is working to address these needs (best practices); and the barriers to these needs being met. In order to provide a roadmap to the TRC Call to Action #66, we made it our mission to seek advice and support from as many Indigenous youth from across Canada as possible.

To answer these questions, we undertook research that incorporates Indigenous research methodologies informed by Indigenous epistemologies. While Indigenous Peoples have rich traditions of knowledge production, research, as they have been conceptualized and practiced within Western frameworks, these methodologies been linked to the colonial subordination of Indigenous Peoples. As a result, Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are often marginalized within research.

Our research was guided by the following three points outlined by Kovach (2015), based on Indigenous epistemologies:

- **Holistic Indigenous knowledge systems** are a legitimate way of knowing.
- **Receptivity and relationship** between researcher and participants is (or ought to be) a natural part of the research methodology.
- **Collectivity**, as a way of knowing, assumes reciprocity to the community.

2.1 Research Approach

OUR MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION was,

“How can we advance TRC Call to Action #66 in establishing multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver reconciliation programs and establishing a national network to share information and best practices?”



Appointed Indigenous Youth Voices Advisor Maatalii Okalik with Charlotte Qamaniq-Mason and Inuit youth students at Jaanimmarik School in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik.

These guidelines ensured that our research was grounded within Indigenous cultures that allows accessibility of findings for Indigenous participants. Our data collection included an on-line cross-sectional survey and community and organizational engagements, including a National Gathering with Indigenous youth leaders. We wanted to hear and engage with the stories of Indigenous youth and treat their stories and experiences as the heart of our data.

2.2 Multi-Method Data Collection

a. Community Dialogues with Indigenous Organizations and Leaders

As Advisors, we knew that there are many individuals and initiatives working tirelessly with and for Indigenous youth, so we were eager to learn more about this positive work already happening in our Indigenous communities. Indigenous Youth Voices conducted a number of community engagement sessions, connecting with individuals, groups, and organizations, either by phone, e-mail or in person. These dialogues were held with youth representatives of national, provincial and community-based Indigenous organizations.

We were very inspired by the engagements we had with a number of grassroots and youth-led/focused initiatives that are doing integral work in relation to reconciliation, such as:

- Qarjuit Youth Council Annual General Meeting
- Nunavut Sivuniksavut
- Nunavik Sivunitsavut
- The National Inuit Youth Council with representation in all regions across Inuit Nunangat
- We Matter
- Canadian Roots Exchange
- 4Rs
- Aboriginal Youth Opportunities
- Métis Settlements General Council
- Native Women’s Association of Canada
- National Association of Friendship Centres
- Youth for Water
- Métis Nation of British Columbia Youth Council
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Youth Council

These community dialogue sessions guided the process of developing research questions and contributed to the perspectives that resulted in the themes and requirements presented here.

Our approach to these dialogues was to take the lead from Indigenous youth from these communities and/or those already living and working in these communities. We engaged community officials or leaders and asked for support in facilitating links and engagement sessions with Indigenous youth and groups in these communities;

we were also able to hire Indigenous youth to support this process.

There were times where we received feedback not to engage a community because of youth feeling lasting trauma and deep disappointment with being over-consulted, without any experienced change or support. We respected advice from these community leaders in these instances.

We encouraged those we were able to connect with to share their experiences and observations from their work with youth. This included priority areas of need for Indigenous youth in their communities, approaches that are working really well for their youth, and challenges or obstacles to their work. We also, of course, shared our hopes and vision for Indigenous Youth Voices and our approach to this work. During these engagement sessions, individuals also shared their ideas, thoughts, and recommendations on advancing the TRC Call to Action #66. A list of who we engaged is in Appendix B.

b. Online Survey of Indigenous Youth

In addition to the community engagement sessions, we knew it was imperative for us to hear from a much wider diversity of Indigenous youth perspectives across Canada. To do this, we developed and launched an online survey – the Indigenous Youth Voices Survey – that was shared widely with Indigenous youth, Indigenous organizations/initiatives across Canada and Indigenous youth leaders and supporters, as well as on-line, leveraging the extensive networks of each Indigenous Youth Voices Advisor. The survey consisted of 24 questions, including demographic questions about age, gender, community, occupation, and more, as well as open-ended questions about school/education, community strengths and challenges, youth programming, and reconciliation. The survey questions can be found in Appendix C.

We recognized that hosting the survey online and in English could pose barriers to participation. To mitigate these barriers, we set up a toll-free line so that youth

could call in and answer the survey questions with someone recording their answers. We also faxed paper copies of the survey to some schools and then entered the data afterwards. For some communities, we brought in iPads so that youth could fill out the surveys in person, in addition to having printed copies of the survey available. An Inuktitut-speaking person was hired to support and translate for Inuit youth.

Because of the short time frame of this project, the survey was only on-line for about three months. Despite this, over 500 Indigenous youth from across Canada completed the survey, which strongly indicates that Indigenous youth have a lot to say and share! Respondents from many different communities across Canada are represented in the survey, as shown in the demographics of who completed the survey. They have many ideas and experiences that should be taken seriously when anyone talks about addressing the challenges of Indigenous youth in Canada. Their responses were raw, honest and reflective of their personal and community experiences and realities.

c. National Youth Gathering of Indigenous Youth Leaders

As emphasized throughout this document and in the title of our initiative – Indigenous Youth Voices – ensuring that the voices and experiences of Indigenous youth were at the heart of our process was of the utmost importance to us. As such, we hosted a three-day National Youth Gathering in Ottawa from December 1 to December 3, 2017. We welcomed over 20 youth leaders to meet with government officials regarding Indigenous Youth Voices and to share their guidance and insight on a roadmap to TRC Call to Action #66.

The leaders who attended the gathering represented youth working in and advocating for their communities, doing integral work as national youth council members, founders of their own non-profit organizations, frontline youth workers, mentors, and more. Invitations were sent out to organizations and individuals we engaged with throughout our term as Advisors, as well as those we felt we needed more input from.

By the Numbers

National Indigenous Youth Survey

500+

Indigenous Youth across Canada completed the survey

Indigenous Nation

208

Inuit youth

193

First Nations youth

55

Métis youth

5

Inuit/FN youth

5

FN/Métis youth

1

Métis/Inuit youth

Gender of Survey Respondents

34%

Male

61%

Female

2%

Prefer not to say

2%

Two-Spirit

1%

Non-binary

Do you speak your Indigenous language?



37%

Yes

20%

No

43%

Trying to learn

Age of Survey Respondents



22%

11-15 years

36%

16-20 years

20%

21-25 years

21%

26-30 years

68% of responses came from students.



Communities of Residence

Survey respondents shared which community they are from, represented in the map above and the list on the following page.

Aklavik	Guelph	Montréal	Thompson
Akulivik	Halifax	Morley Reservation	Thunder Bay
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation	Hall Beach	Mount Currie	Tillsonburg - MNO Clear Waters Métis Council
Arviat	Hay River	Muskowekwan First Nation	Tkaronto / Toronto
Baker Lake	Igloolik	Nain	Tsuut'ina Nation
Barrie	Inukjuak	Nepean	Tuktoyaktuk
Beaumonta	Inuvik	North Bay	Tyendinaga Mohawk Township
Beausoleil First Nation	Iqaluit	Okanagan Indian Band	Ulukhaktok
Behchoko	Ivujivik	Old Masset, Haida Gwaii	Umiujaq
Belle River	Joussard	Ottawa	Vancouver
Brantford	Kamloops	Pangnirtung	Vernon District Métis Association (VDMA)
Brokenhead Ojibway Nation	Kang'iqsualujuaq	Parry Sound	Victoria
Burnaby	Kang'iqsujuaq	Peace River	Wabaseemoong
Calgary	Kang'irsuk	Pikwakanagan	War Lake
Cambridge Bay	Kapuskasing	Pond Inlet	Waterloo
Cape Dorset	Kehewin Cree Nation	Port Severn	Wauzhushk Onigum
Capilano Indian Reserve (Squamish Nation I.R. No.5)	Kenora	Portage La Prairie	Westbank First Nations
Carmacks	Kettle and Stoney Point	Povirnituk	Whitefish Lake First Nation
Chatham	Kikino Métis Settlement	Prince George	Whitefish Bay
Chisasibi	Kimmirut	Quaqtaq	Whitehorse
Cornwall	Kingston	Rankin Inlet	Windsor-Essex
Credit River Métis Council	Kitchener-Waterloo	Resolute Bay	Windsor
Cross Lake	Kitigan Zibi	Rutherglen	Winnipeg
Curve Lake First Nation	Anishanabeg	Sagamok	Yellowknife
Dawson Creek	Kugaaruk	Salluit	
Deer Lake	Kugluktuk	Sanikiluaq	
Dij	Kuujuarapik	Saskatoon	
Edmonton	Kuujjuaq	Sault Ste. Marie	
Eel River Bar	La Ronge	Secwepmec Territory (Sqwlax)	
Etobicoke	Lac Brochet	Seine River	
Fort McPherson	Langley	Six Nations of the Grand River Territory	
Fort Simpson	Leaf Rapids	Skidegate, Haida Gwaii	
Fort Smith	Leamington	Splatsin	
George River	Lekwungen Territory	St. John's	
Gift Lake Métis Settlement	Lillooet	Stittsville	
God's Lake Narrows	Little Pine First Nation	Sudbury	
Goose Bay	London	Surrey	
Grise Fiord	Maple Ridge	Swan River	
	Masset, Haida Gwaii	Tasiujaq	
	Midland	Temagami First Nation	
	Mitaanjigamiing First Nation		

The insight that was shared by the youth leaders was gathered through facilitated activities and meaningful dialogue related to Indigenous Youth Voices' work to date, community priorities in relation to the TRC Call to Action #66, and next steps for moving forward with the current Indigenous Youth Voices mandate.

Over the course of the three days of the Gathering, it was clear that these young advocates feel the honour, yet the heavy responsibility, of being agents of change in improving the lives of Indigenous youth. They are all adamant about the need for healing, hope, and better outcomes, not just for their generation, but for all the generations to come.

The need for decolonization, repatriation, restitution and reconciliation — on the terms of Indigenous Peoples — is directly tied to some of their deepest fears around Indigenous communities losing their land, culture, and way of life.

While each person brought their own unique stories, experiences, and perspectives to the Gathering, they also shared a collective sense of deep responsibility and commitment to youth-led advocacy and action. Their voices truly represent invaluable insight into how reconciliation and the TRC Call to Action #66 should be addressed.

d. Review and Summary of Relevant Past Work and Research

There are several strong reports that offer recommendations on a range of Indigenous youth needs and priority topics. We collected and reviewed a select number of them, primarily written reports and some scholarly articles. We acknowledge that there are many more that could be included. Because of the number of existing reports, the research strategy for Indigenous Youth Voices became focused on collecting these reports and analyzing the themes within and across them. We have highlighted a number of these reports in Section 3.3 and have compiled an additional lengthy list of reports and documents relevant to, and impacting Indigenous youth in Appendix A.

“I hope these youth submissions are valued. It feels like these surveys just get lost in the date, and youth are constantly asked to fill out paper after paper. Things don’t change after that. I hope we get to see the action items from our invaluable contributions to this project.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

03.

What We Have Learned

AN OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Reflections on Community Strengths and Challenges

3.2 What Does Reconciliation Mean to Indigenous Youth? Five Key Themes

Theme 1: Acknowledging the Past

Theme 2: Healing

Theme 3: Improving Relations

Theme 4: Treaty and Land Rights

Theme 5: Equity

3.3 Summary of Relevant Past Work and Research

3.1. Reflections on Community Strengths and Challenges

“I’m proud of members and youth who take initiative without being asked – who are actively trying to do things for their community. Strengths are those older who are willing to engage with the younger generation.”

This section offers a glimpse into how the Indigenous youth we engaged with view and experience their communities. Before diving into questions directly related to reconciliation, the Indigenous Youth Voices survey asked respondents to reflect on the following questions:

- What **strengths** do you see in your community? What are you proud of?
- What **challenges** are faced by your community? What causes the most harm?
- Do you have any possible **solutions** to address these challenges and harm?



Appointed Indigenous Youth Voices Advisor Gabrielle Fayant with youth participants at the National Youth Gathering on Traditional Algonquin Territory in December 2017.

The answers that were shared reflect themes that are carried out through this document and provide a broader context for the following sections that are directly related to reconciliation and the TRC Call to Action #66.

Community Strengths

The top three themes of community strengths that emerged from the survey responses were: **i) Culture and Language; ii) Sense of Community; and iii) Resilience and Determination.**

I) CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Overwhelmingly, when asked about community strengths, youth responded with answers related to Indigenous culture and language. Youth place a high value on having access to learning and speaking their Indigenous language, ceremony, learning from Elders and knowledge keepers, having access to and spending more time on the land as a place of learning, thriving and being. This sentiment was also reflected at the National Youth Gathering, where youth leaders expressed how they use their cultural knowledge and stories as sources of strength for grounding and contextualizing their identities and current realities.

Indigenous youth express a lot of pride when they are able to see their people living true to their culture and speaking their own language; they are eager to learn from Elders, knowledge keepers, and each other, and eager to find ways to stay true to their cultural roots while also navigating a Western-dominated world.

“The strengths in my community would be the Elders and how they want the best for the future generations. They encourage us to keeping our culture, lands, and language. I’m proud that there are still people in my community that strive for maximum possibility our community can achieve.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“We have a good connection to land, and we have a couple of first-language Ojibwe speakers left. I am proud that we have a few people who are extremely committed to land-based education.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Proud of Inuit culture in my community. Proud of Inuit homeland and access to culturally-dependent activities to the land, like hunting, fishing, camping, and little things like berry picking. I am proud to see growth in our population and smiling, healthy Inuit. It is very obvious Inuit do well when they are invested in and when they can be rooted in culture and language.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

II) SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A sense of community pride was also a major theme when it came to community strengths. Survey respondents shared their appreciation for, and recognition of community unity and support, especially during hard times. When crisis situations happen, youth indicated pride in how community members come together to

support each other. Youth also recognize and appreciate times when community gather to discuss and address internal issues and challenges.

“The strengths I see in my community are that we all come together and support one another in any time of need. Whether it be for special occasions like having a great time together during the Christmas season or when a community member has passed on/traveled for medical treatment with little to no funds.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I am proud of the support of the Métis Nation BC. They create a sense of belonging by offering culturally-competent programming to my family. The community events feel like a family event, where everyone is there for a common goal of learning and sharing our culture.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“We gather as a community often and have even sat down to talk about issues that go on like lateral violence, and it has actually started to lessen as an issue among us.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“There’s always help when you need it. I’m proud of how the whole community comes together when something bad happens. You can see all the help and love people have for you.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

III) RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION

Resilience and determination are very much tied to the Sense of Community and Culture and Language themes. Indigenous youth are very aware that colonization, daily and systemic racism and discrimination, intergenerational trauma, lateral violence etc., are all issues that their people deal with everyday; the resilience of their people to continue to fight for their rights and self-determination is the ultimate strength of Indigenous Peoples.

This resilience is tied to the preservation and revitalization of language and culture, having a strong sense of identity, and continually fighting for Indigenous self-determination, as well as survival, in its simplest form. One youth responded by simply saying, “I’m proud that I’m alive.”

“The Métis Community has always been an adaptive Community; we have always made the best that we could with what we have. Métis women have always been independent, have always been family wage earners, and have always taken responsibility for our families and I am proud of my fierce Métis aunties, my grandma, my mom, and my sisters. I love to surround myself with my Métis brothers and sisters but also our First Nations and Inuit cousins. The Métis Nation is so young, we have so much to learn from our relatives. I believe our strengths as a Community lie in our ability to adapt!”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Resilience! We do so much with so little funding, support, and recognition.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“My home community is so resilient and moves forward as one entity, supporting and aiding each other to rise up and find our dignity and culture again. My community is also very beautiful and my favourite part of going home is being on the land with my people.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“My people are great at standing their ground, fighting against what is wrong, and trying to compromise. We all co-exist together and where I live it is strongly believed that everything is connected and without one, we cannot live without the other. The supernatural world plays a big part in how we have grown and become who we are.”

I feel a good amount of people here have a great sense of who they are and this helps them greatly.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Other themes that emerged as community strengths or areas of pride for youth include: youth leadership, schooling and youth programs, being able to participate in sport and recreational activities, seeing increased inclusivity, especially of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit youth, and witnessing the willingness of community members to embrace change for a better future.

Community Challenges and Proposed Solutions

The challenges facing Indigenous communities are wide-ranging and interwoven at the same time. Deeply rooted in intergenerational trauma and colonialism, these challenges include lack of basic needs such as housing and water, mental health and addiction issues, violence, racism, loss of identity and culture, and more. Further, Canada has instated a legal framework that some see as forcing Indigenous Nations into conflict and competition with one another, leading to lateral violence.

Racism, colonialism, negative attitudes of White settlers, and the lack of recognition of Indigenous people — the history of colonialism and residential schools and its effects — were emphasized by youth, many of whom perceive this lack of recognition as an unwillingness to learn or care about Indigenous Peoples. It is important to understand that the social and economic conditions experienced by Indigenous people today is an extension of colonialism, reflected in negative cycles that are identified in this colonial reality. It is further exacerbated by continued inequitable underfunding from the government for Indigenous Peoples.

“Until people understand what has created the hardships that Indigenous people face, there will never be any progression in the pursuit of inclusion.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“The stigma that if you are Indigenous you are inherently less than. We still have to overcome the ideas that were established about Indigenous Peoples during the colonial period.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

What are the challenges facing Indigenous communities?

479 survey participants answered this question and 48%, almost half of all the answers, cited drug and alcohol use. Mental health and suicide were the next most cited challenges causing the most harm in communities.

“We are forgotten, misunderstood, and underrepresented.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Challenges include intergenerational trauma and negative cycles. I think it is most harmful when Inuit youth do not learn about their history and do not have the safe, good quality of life to foster independent growth while rooted in their culture and language. It is most harmful when it is known that there are social and economic inequities for Inuit compared to other Canadians and not an organized and concerted effort to remove that gap – Inuit youth are set to fail. This needs to change now.”

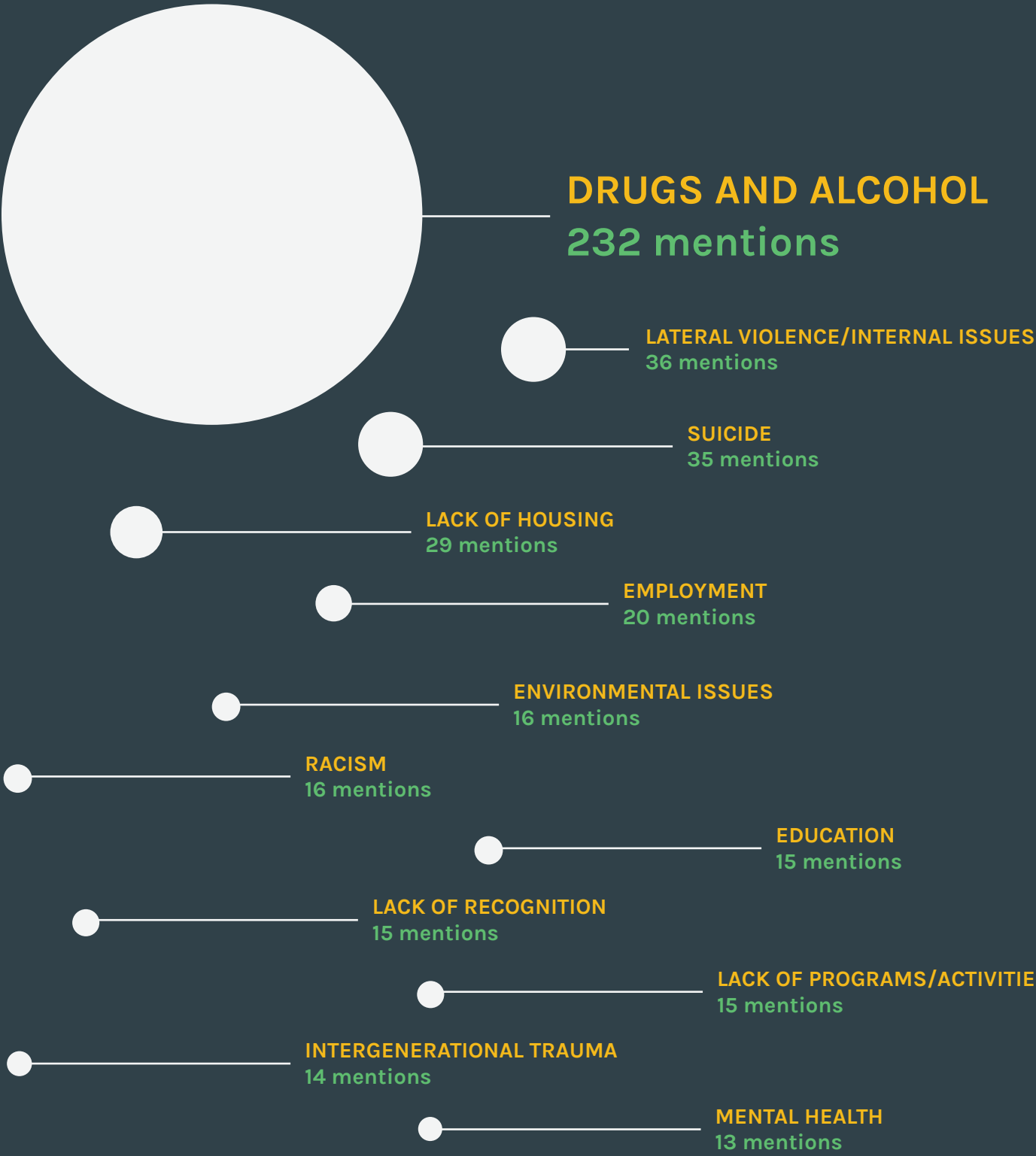
- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Some respondents acknowledged the links between these challenges, identifying outright how one can lead to the other:

“Alcohol, drugs, and ultimately a forgotten sense of who we are. We hurt, so we drink, and we raise children who hurt, thus the cycle repeats itself.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Community Challenges Identified by Survey Respondents



- COLONIALISM
- VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ABUSE
13 mentions

- FOOD SECURITY
- LOSS OF IDENTITY
12 mentions

- LOSS OF CULTURE/LAND
11 mentions

- POVERTY
10 mentions

“HOUSING!... [I] can barely live let alone educate myself to get a good job and give back to others. Lack of housing leads to overcrowding, poor health outcomes, difficulty participating in studies, vulnerability to violence, and more.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“The strong influence of imposed government structures makes me feel oppressed and unsafe. It doesn’t promote true cultural learning of our own systems of government, and I feel like this imposed system fosters nepotism, lateral violence, and it is not our way. This strong hold on how we govern ourselves is something that I think about a lot as a young person.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Our community faces an 80% unemployment rate. I find that alcohol, unemployment, and lack of resources and housing are contributing to these challenges.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

IDENTITY

Many of the challenges identified by youth relate back to identity. Without a strong sense of cultural identity, the challenges that Indigenous youth face, such as racism and intergenerational trauma, are that much harder to deal with. While cultural identity can be a source of pride and strength for Indigenous youth, if they do not have a strong connection to their traditional land, cultural identity and history, whether it be through language, traditions, ceremony, etc., living in the colonial context of Canada and its systems can be a challenging space to navigate and reconcile. The purpose of residential schools and colonization was to strip away Indigenous culture and identity from Indigenous Peoples, and while these attempts were not successful, the lasting effects of intergenerational trauma from this violence has resulted in consequences such as: youth not knowing their full cultural histories, having limited access to learning their traditional language and not being able to experience Indigenous ceremonies and ways of healing.

Further adding complexity is the fact there is a lack of understanding among settlers as well as among some Indigenous Peoples themselves, about Indigenous identity and the distinctions between and within First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This lack of understanding can lead to problematic programming

and approaches to policy-making from government, partners, and other institutions, further exacerbating challenges uniquely experienced by Indigenous youth.

“Métis people, like our Inuit and First Nations relations, face crises of identity. Métis identity is not well understood by settler or even by Indigenous society. We need more opportunities to come together to learn about our shared history and where we are as Métis people now.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“The main challenge for my community is actually being recognized for who we are [by] the levels of government and larger education groups... There is a lot of political stresses and conflict for defining who is Métis and who is represented at the tables in government discussions. Another issue is struggles with identity and finding where we truly belong. Feelings at times of being imposters at First Nations events when going to learn about their cultural identity.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I am afraid that our youth are in crisis... They don’t know who they are. That’s what I came here to talk about... Finances are great, but I want to get to the real issues – with our kids. That’s why I am here. A lot of programs have been done for us and not by us.”

- NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING YOUTH LEADER

“Identity crisis in young people, and peer pressure amongst youth remains a challenge: peer pressure not being unique to Inuit communities, but the push to “prove your Inukness” is the most hurtful avenue. Not having enough coping skills and avenues to secure this identity in what is deemed ‘successful’ ways remains a challenge.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

In order to address this crisis around identity, youth expressed the need and desire to be able to learn and practice traditional Indigenous ways of being, through culture, ceremony and language. Youth also suggest hybrid healing and learning practices that combine traditional and Western ways of addressing challenges such as depression, addiction, and loss of identity.

“It is my hope that TRC #66 is implemented so communities can support Indigenous youth in achieving their desired levels of self-determination rooted in the types of programs they desire, whether it is language training, a safe place to hang out, cultural knowledge hubs or community gatherings. I wish for these programs to be sustainable and long-lasting in a legacy way for people at the community level.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

Having a choice in the kinds of opportunities available and ensuring that the options include culture, language, and land-based opportunities is important and integral to our well-being, emotionally and physically.

“Opportunities for safe dialogue within communities and amongst Nations. Once we have built a strong foundation and understanding amongst Indigenous groups, we will be strong enough to see real change in our communities and across Canada.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I think language classes are an important place to start – our history and our worldviews are tied up within our language. I think free, on-line, cohort-based Michif language courses could help Métis diaspora stay connected and learn from each other.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“We need to have more places to teach the Inuit history and then from there, Inuit youth will understand the history and then they will make a difference and break the ongoing trauma that comes from generations and generations by going to healing workshops and then they realize we don’t have enough workers, such as psychologists and psychiatrists in our communities, then more people will start demanding for them so it will finally make a difference.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Overwhelmingly, Indigenous youth primarily see learning opportunities and youth programming as key to addressing the challenges faced by their communities. Many suggested workshops and presentations on topics ranging from Indigenous language training, skill building, culture and workplace violence, to mental health support, parenting, and supporting the transition from reserve to urban cities. Youth noted that having these programs, especially ones offered after school hours, will keep youth busy and hopefully, support youth to heal and motivate them to connect more deeply to their culture and identity.

For addictions and alcohol, many youth indicated that more treatment centres, support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), and education on the effects of substance use would especially be helpful. These centres do not currently exist in many communities, and when they do, they are often underfunded without the longterm capacity to truly support community members through the healing necessary. Community events and sport and recreation opportunities were also included as types of initiatives that could respond to the challenges Indigenous communities are facing.

These opportunities are seen as vital to fostering the sense of community vital for youth to heal and, hopefully, thrive.

In order to provide any or all of these programs, funding – ideally stable, multi-year funding – is required.

“Create more alcohol and drug awareness and opportunities to learn about the long-term emotional and physical impact, as well as psychological impact, on users.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“There has to be more after care after a treatment program. Our members want to get sober and stay sober but there are not enough resources to support them after they are done their treatment programs.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“We need more youth programs and a youth hangout area at hours all through the day ‘til 9pm. Stuff to keep our youth busy and motivated.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“If we got more funding to help and encourage our community members to achieve a high school diploma. That funding can also help with projects and new businesses to create employment plus to help grow and improve our community.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

As a lack of affordable and livable housing was indicated as a challenge, it is no surprise that housing and shelters for the homeless were suggested as a solution, though it is important to note that this likely reflects a First

“After many years of feeling helpless in Cambridge Bay, I’ve seen how having culture and traditions can be the guides towards a better life. Take a person who is hurting and having rough times and put them on the land, fishing, camping, workshop, weekend, day, hours, weeks and they will come back lighter, maybe not perfect, but lighter. The land heals. The water is healing. The winds heal. The nuna (land) will take care of us, if we take care of it.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

Nations and Inuit perspective, as Métis peoples are predominantly integrated into larger non-Indigenous communities. Related to both housing and youth programming, the need for a safe, physical space for youth to gather, participate in programming, and, generally, hang out in, is needed in many communities. Finally, a handful of youth also indicated that better maintenance of their physical environment — for example, through recycling, having garbage be picked up, monitoring water treatment — would support in mitigating some of the challenges in their communities.

“More supportive people need to be out there, more shelters youth can go to for safety, hubs open 24 hours people can run to, not just in one location, a place where workers are aware of safety, and at-risk youth can visit, sleep, eat instead of them running with no place to go.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Create more safe spaces for youth to speak amongst themselves and with someone they can relate to. Still believe in skill-building workshops, and traditional tool building, as well as sewing, but it needs to be a blend of physical building and academic skill building (reading and writing).”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

**Is reconciliation important to you?
What does reconciliation mean to
Indigenous youth? Is it important?
What should it look like?**

73 youth who filled out the Indigenous Youth Voices survey stated that they didn't know what reconciliation means to them. Almost 30% of respondents stated they were unsure of what reconciliation is or if it is important to them. 24% felt conflicted or negatively about reconciliation.

All of these suggestions and ideas for addressing the challenges that Indigenous communities are facing are very much connected to building on their existing strengths and sources of pride, and addressing historical injustices and their continued effects.

The following sections explore these themes within the context of reconciliation and the purpose of *Indigenous Youth Voices: TRC Call to Action #66*, focusing on both the insight gathered and summarized from the National Youth Gathering, as well as the Indigenous Youth Voices on-line survey.

3.2. What Does Reconciliation Mean to Indigenous Youth? Five Key Themes

The Canadian Government has committed to “reconciliation” with Indigenous Peoples as a key priority. This means that they are attempting to improve the relationship between Indigenous Peoples, the Government, and Canadians. Every mandate letter to federal ministers across the Government of Canada indicates that all departments must prioritize Indigenous Peoples in Canada. As well, the Government of Canada has committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action.

Some respondents expressed anger towards the Canadian government for continuing to talk about reconciliation as a concept, but not actually engaging in reconciliation on the terms of Indigenous Peoples, with action leading to positive change for Indigenous communities. Instead, reconciliation comes across as insincere in its commitment to actually treat Indigenous people as equals, and rather, seems to be a concept that is merely a facade, lacking true authentic desire to change how government and settlers engage with and support Indigenous communities in Canada. Others feel that reconciliation is a complete non-starter without the return of land and reciprocity as intended by treaties.

“I feel most types of reconciliation attempted is usually reconciliation for white people to make themselves feel better. As Indigenous Peoples, we are always ready for reconciliation but we are waiting for true and sincere reconciliation.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Reconciliation is important, but it has to happen on our terms when we’re ready, not when the white man says, “Okay, I’m ready for you to forgive me now.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I am conflicted. Our people have experienced harm through the government and the institutions it supports. I don’t feel like we need to improve our approaches to the relationship, but it is the government that needs to make DRASTIC changes in order for us to trust and build relationships. This includes upholding promises to Indigenous communities regarding pipelines and dams.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

It is clear that reconciliation can mean many things to different people, depending on their own realities, experiences with colonization, and family histories. Reconciliation — what it means, how it feels, what it looks like — is an evolving concept with multiple entry points for Indigenous youth.

For those who are engaged in community-building and advocacy work, whether it be with and for Indigenous youth or in other areas of Indigenous capacity-building, what drives their work and willingness to engage with the concept of reconciliation is the overwhelming desire and need to make life easier and better for Indigenous people, especially Indigenous youth and future generations.

“It’s the healing of our people. Building a healthy relationship with the rest of Canada. It’s everyone contributing to a healthier mother earth, protecting our fresh waters and clean air, protecting our medicines and animals. It’s a whole conscious effort. It’s not labeling someone because of the colour of their skin, what they wear, or where they’re from. Understanding that we are all human, that we all need the same things to live, that no one is different.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I want everyone to be seen as a human. I want my people to try and have healthy relationships outside of our race. I want the Government to see us as a people and not as a barrier. I want my people to become empowered again and stop dwelling on what happened to us but I also want

our country to know about our past and know that things cannot be changed overnight.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I think that it is very important to reconcile. Not only with the government and the rest of Canada, but also with ourselves, our communities, and our families.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

As part of the National Youth Gathering held in December 2017, youth leaders had the opportunity to meet with Senator Murray Sinclair, who was also the Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), to discuss the future of Indigenous Youth Voices. Youth Leaders in attendance asked Senator Sinclair questions such as these:

How do you forgive on a daily basis?

How do we help the children and grandchildren of survivors?

How do we make effective change?

What is the Senator’s opinion on the continual colonization even with the Truth and Reconciliation dialogue?

How do you navigate the colonial system and do this important work?

These weighty questions embody just a fraction of the complexity of what it means to be an Indigenous youth — as well as an advocate for Indigenous youth — during this time that is referred to by many as ‘reconciliation’.

The Indigenous Youth Voices survey asked a number of questions related to reconciliation, including:

**Is reconciliation important to you?
What does reconciliation mean to Indigenous youth? Is it important?
What should it look like?**

Here, we highlight five of the major themes that emerged from the survey data, as well as the National Youth Gathering, in an effort to share a broad overview of how youth understand reconciliation and what they feel is important and integral to moving forward with

reconciliation. This section captures just a sample of the diverse ways in which Indigenous youth shared their understanding of reconciliation.

Generally, reconciliation is important for most youth, and many see it as a framework that can and should be used to address the lasting effects of intergenerational trauma and continued manifestations of colonial oppression in a variety of ways.

Youth see reconciliation as healing, important to improving relations within their communities, with non-Indigenous people and government, a pathway to equity, and more.

In many ways, all of the themes that emerged from the survey responses and National Youth Gathering speak to each other and are intertwined in a complex and layered way that is represented in many of the quotes shared in this section. There are not just one or two major elements of reconciliation, but many that must be constant, interwoven, and committed to. That being said, survey responses indicate that at the root of reconciliation is the basic and genuine acknowledgment of the colonization of Indigenous Peoples and the resulting lasting trauma caused by colonialism and residential schools.

Theme 01: Acknowledging the Past

For many youth, reconciliation is multi-faceted but must begin with settlers, the Canadian government, and non-Indigenous Peoples acknowledging Canada's history of colonization with Indigenous Peoples and the lasting effects of intergenerational trauma. The negative impacts of intergenerational trauma run deep within Indigenous communities and are consistently referred to in a variety of ways in the survey responses — many of them are reflected in the previous section, *Reflections on Community Strengths and Challenges*. In order to address these challenges, in order to move forward collectively with reconciliation, a basic understanding and acknowledgment of this history is imperative.

Education is also needed for younger generations of Indigenous youth to also learn the full extent of how colonialism and ongoing settler colonialism continues to impact Indigenous communities. Without this understanding across all Canadians and Indigenous Peoples, healing, reciprocity, restored land rights, and equity — all key tenets of reconciliation — cannot happen in a meaningful or authentic way.

“There is no reconciliation without truth and we will only come together if we can understand effects of past wrongs in order to build positive, respectful, and meaningful relationships to return land, help heal trauma, and allow us return to and value our own culture, identities, and autonomy.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“There is so much of our history buried, hiding with the government... and there is so much that still needs to be fixed. Children of child abuse, which I feel strongly about and happens a lot in Aboriginal families, is a dire issue. I struggle daily because of it. More kids need help than we offer. More adults need help repairing their trauma and stopping generational abuse and addiction.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Part of this acknowledgment is the essential education of all Canadians on the true, uncensored history of Indigenous people. Some respondents placed this responsibility on schools in Canada, suggesting that school curriculum needs to be changed to teach this history, while others answered more generally, stating that non-Indigenous Canadians need to learn more about their privilege. Other youth feel that settlers and non-Indigenous Canadians must take on the responsibility of learning about this histories and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, while some just stated generally that more education about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis culture, values, and histories is needed in order to create a stronger sense of understanding of Indigenous people and their realities today. Regardless, clear action needs to be taken so that this learning can happen.

“Reconciliation means a Canada where I can be proud to be an Indigenous person. It means I can live with a feeling that I am understood and respected by all Canadians and looked at as an equal. To me this would involve complete

“I am not surrounded by reconciliation; it is something I would like to feel in the community. Every day it is a struggle to believe that we have come to a point of understanding, because nobody truly shows how resilient they have been to say we are reconciled. We are constantly fighting to come to an agreement, an agreement that we can all believe we have authority over.

We have to heal as people. Like the saying, “hurt people hurt people”. Unless we have healed ourselves we cannot heal a community; we are still on our journey to becoming equal and reconciled as one. We must accept our reality; we must believe and strengthen our values we carry. We must understand that life has a meaning and there is a purpose for everything and we must improvise: make do with what we have right here together.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

curriculum changes for public and faith-based schools to teach the true history of our people so that racism is a thing of the past.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Most Canadians do not understand the realities of Indigenous history or identity – as long as that is the case, our people will continue to feel internal pressures to either assimilate into settler society or to turn away from Canada all together. I believe there is a way for ALL of the Nations of Turtle Island to restore balance and live together in a good way.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Theme 02: Healing

Healing begins with this acknowledgment of past wrongdoings and is steeped in all aspects of reconciliation. The vast majority of youth survey respondents and the young leaders at the National Youth Gathering are acutely aware of the depth of trauma that continues to affect the well-being of Indigenous Peoples across Canada; the notion of healing is brought up time and again.

One of the main answers to the question ‘Why reconciliation?’ is healing — it is needed in order for Indigenous communities to move forward, through culture, language, reparations, decolonization, equity, etc. It is seen as an ongoing journey for Indigenous Peoples that must be supported by non-Indigenous allies on the terms of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous youth, especially the young leaders at the National Youth Gathering, also point out that oppression is still happening — healing is not just about addressing past colonial injustices but also addressing how this colonialism still manifests itself today.

“Canada’s refusal to teach its students an honest version of the history of Canada (one that includes the effects of colonialism, disenfranchisement, and assimilation on Indigenous people) causes the most harm to all community members. Until people understand what has created the hardships that Indigenous people face, there will never be any progression in the pursuit of inclusion.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Our history has been ignored for too long and too many people have suffered at the hands of the government. It is important that we educate

others about what happened, as well as give everyone the tools to heal and move on from this awful past. We cannot be ignored any longer.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Further, one of the main sentiments that emerged from the National Youth Gathering was that young Indigenous leaders feel the responsibility of ensuring that future generations of Indigenous youth will not have to deal with the same trauma, community challenges, and search for identity that they experience and witness on a daily basis. Healing is imperative for these young people to be able to learn traditions, teachings, and language from older generations and Elders — for their own well-being as well as to be able to pass on to younger generations. It is also needed in order for them to be able to have the strength and optimism to carry their advocacy and community-building work forward.

“I believe healing our communities is an incredibly important aspect of reconciliation and ensuring youth have the cultural confidence to carry the stories of our Elders and ancestors forward.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“I am afraid of people feeling defeated. I am afraid of people losing hope... We must hold each other together. We need to understand that we are all in different phases of healing. I want people to feel fired up. We can no longer accept the minimum.”

- NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING YOUTH LEADER

Theme 03: Improving Relations

The concept of improving relations between Indigenous people and government, settlers, and non-Indigenous people also features prominently in the survey responses to questions about the meaning and importance of reconciliation. Survey responses on what reconciliation means to youth ranged from themes around collaboration and friendship, such as “the restoration of friendly relations” and “two nations working together towards the same goal,” to more nuanced descriptions that referred to respect, active engagement, listening, and humility from the government/non-Indigenous Peoples, and, of course, the acknowledgment of historical injustices.

Some see reconciliation as directly related to improving ties to government, while others think of it in broader, more general terms of understanding and connections between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. While many aspects of reconciliation are tied to the restoration

of autonomy, land rights, the healing of Indigenous people, etc., the emphasis placed on improving relations shows that Indigenous youth are aware that non-Indigenous people and government must be part of this process, and, in some ways, can play a significant role in supporting the improved well-being of Indigenous people. That being said, unsurprisingly, there are high levels of distrust and disillusionment when it comes to this, especially when it comes to government change and action.

“Reconciliation is the process of achieving a healthy relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“It means constantly renewing and strengthening the relationship of equals through discussion. It means constantly learning from one another and respecting our differences.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Genuine reconciliation is important to me, however, the Canadian government has shown itself to be disingenuous in its dealings with Indigenous people and the issues they face.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Theme 04: Treaty and Land Rights

Another key theme that emerged from the voices of Indigenous youth, directly tied to relations with the Canadian government, is about respecting treaties, land rights and the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples. Because the historical basis of Indigenous and settler relations is rooted in treaty, reciprocity, and mutual benefit — and these agreements have been broken and/or manipulated in so many damaging ways — Indigenous youth are strong in their belief that reconciliation must address their right to their lands and self-determination. Further, for many Indigenous people, culture and their way of living is rooted in the land; with land development, resource extraction, and climate change, this way of living is constantly being challenged and/or threatened.

One National Youth Gathering participant from Nunatsiavut highlighted this by saying, “The Indigenous people in the North will be affected by climate change...we need to commit to being the most eco-friendly group that Indigenous groups have ever seen. We need to be the lead for other groups to start

advocating more for our land.” For Indigenous youth, the return of land rights and respect for treaties are significant, tangible ways that government should show its commitment to reconciliation, and any lack of action in these areas directly signifies the opposite.

“I do not believe reconciliation is possible until they commit to stewarding the pre-existing agreements they committed to hundreds of years ago. For example, the Dish With One Spoon and the Two Row Wampum. I also don’t think it can be important to me until they redistribute resources gained up until this point, which means receding land and resources made from the land.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Reconciliation is important, it takes us back to the treaties and how we need to keep our promises and keep the respect of one another. I think it is important for everyone to come together to make positive agreements for all Indigenous Peoples.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“We plead for protection, assistance, safety, and opportunities; we are ignored. The government won’t listen to us as equals, and don’t treat us as equals. Reconciliation may occur only after the land is returned to us, after the treaties are finally respected, after we are treated as humans.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Theme 05: Equity

Indigenous youth also relate equity and inclusivity to reconciliation. As shared in the *Community Challenges and Proposed Solutions* section, oppression and racism remain a significant part of daily life for many Indigenous youth. They see it and experience it in varying ways, directly and indirectly — the way people treat them, the seeming lack of understanding or awareness about their history or culture by many non-Indigenous people, the continued marginalization of their communities, etc. One youth shared a response that sums up the harsh disparity that some Indigenous youth experience and feel, saying, “If reconciliation is accepted by all today, the next generation could regard us as human and not with disgust.”

It is fitting, then, that youth view equity and inclusivity as another integral reason for, and aspect of, reconciliation. That being said, despite continued rhetoric around reconciliation, especially from



Appointed Indigenous Youth Voices Advisors Maatalii Okalik and André Bear dancing with Inuit youth at Parliament Hill in September 2017 at the National Inuit Youth Council's Celebrate Life event on World Suicide Prevention Day.

government, youth do not see the Canadian government as treating them with any sense of equality or equity, deserving of the same standard of well-being and respect as non-Indigenous Canadians. Instead, they hear and know about the notion of Canada being an inclusive and welcoming country, rich with resources, and, yet, do not experience or benefit from this version of Canada.

“Reconciliation is about creating shared space in Canada; we can create a country that is as inclusive, as diverse, and as safe as the rest of the world seems to think it is.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“The day that I can see Indigenous youth achieve the standard of living and the quality of life that is enjoyed by the rest of the Canadian society and its youth is when I will believe reconciliation has been achieved.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“A separated people are weak on their own, but if we all come together we will become stronger. Right now First Nations people are seen as less than, still! We need to stop this discrimination in a firm but respectful manner.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Stop treating me like a fashion item, or a thing to pity. Give me access to a livable lifestyle. Stop holding me down with the Indian Act. Return the land by at least recognizing you’re on it by providing us access to the resources. Stop the empty promises, act on them. You’re taking the water, the fish, the logs, and somehow we’re still under the poverty line. That’s not balanced. That’s not feeling equal. We are equal, the laws do not show that accurately yet.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

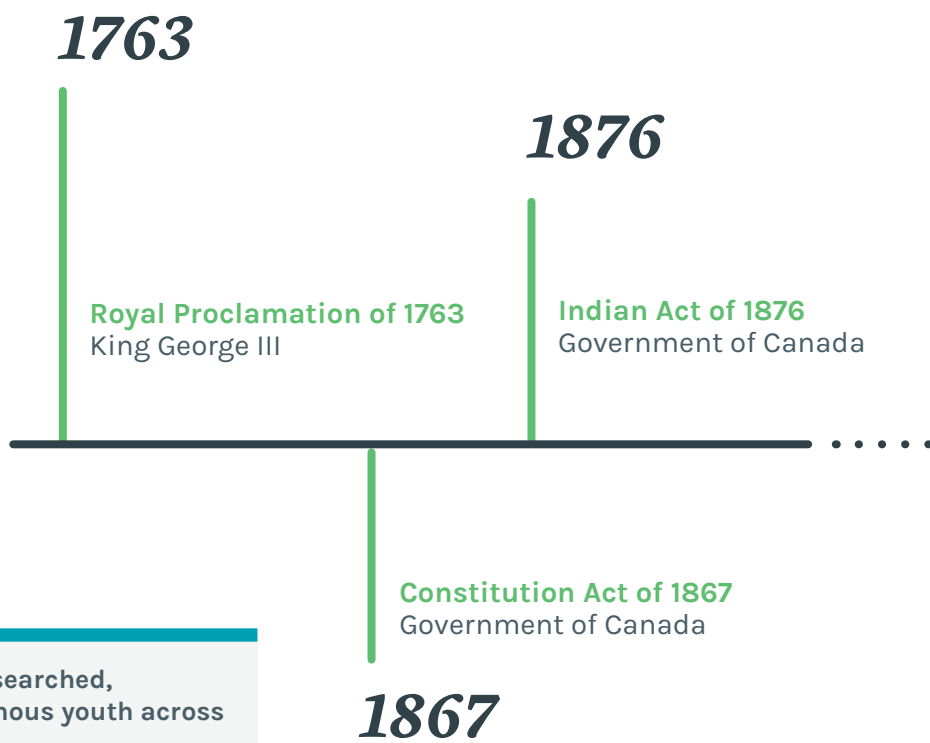
3.3 - A Review of Select Literature

There are a number of influential documents and reports that mark seminal moments in the history of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

The literature, research, recommendations, and inquiries – including those authored by government and by Indigenous advocates and grassroots organizations – contributed to this report.

We fully acknowledge that there are many more documents critical to our histories than we could include in this review.

Although we must acknowledge and learn from the past, we must also put this history of words – of recommendations and requirements – into action if we are to effect real change for Indigenous youth and communities. As one of our survey respondents emphasized, "reconciliation encompasses action, not words".



The documents featured here (collected, researched, recommended, and/or submitted by Indigenous youth across Canada) have been organized as such:

- Before Truth & Reconciliation**
These documents mark select seminal moments prior to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Truth & Reconciliation**
These reports are connected to the work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada, a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, and the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

- Youth-Led Reports**
These reports are written, compiled, and published by youth and/or youth-led organizations.
- Reports on Indigenous Youth Well-being**
These reports focus on the well-being of Indigenous youth, with a focus on safety, physical and mental health, sexuality and gender identity, and education.

"Reconciliation is very important. The people who want to live here must know the history of how we got here and ensure not to repeat it."

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

1997

Summary of the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
Institute of Governance

2006

Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
Government of Canada and Plaintiffs

2005

First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders Strengthening Relationships and Closing The Gap
Government of Canada

2008

Aboriginal Youth in Canada: Emerging Issues, Research Priorities, and Policy Implications
Policy Research Initiative

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
United Nations

2014

Feathers of Hope: A First Nations Youth Action Plan

Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth

2011

First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

2015

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

B. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Qikiqtani Truth Commission Final Report: Achieving Saimaqtigiingniq

Qikiqtani Inuit Association

2013

Saimaqtigiingniq

A new relationship when past opponents get back together, meet in the middle, and are at peace.



Before Truth & Reconciliation

These documents mark select seminal moments prior to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



Youth-Led Reports

These reports are written, compiled, and published by youth and/or youth-led organizations.



Truth & Reconciliation

These reports are connected to the work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada, a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.



Reports on Indigenous Youth Well-being

The reports focus on the well-being of Indigenous youth, with a focus on safety, physical and mental health, sexuality and gender identity, and education.

2017

2016

**Assembly of First Nations
National Youth Council Calls
to Action on Life Promotion in
First Nations Communities**
Assembly of First Nations

**Métis Settlements
Strategic Summary Report**
Métis Settlements
General Council

**National Inuit Suicide
Prevention Strategy**
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

**Our Voices:
Connecting Yukon's Youth**
Our Voices

**Two-Spirit and LGBTQ
Indigenous Health**
Rainbow Health Ontario

**Breaking Point:
The Suicide Crisis in
Indigenous Communities**
House of Commons Standing
Committee on Indigenous and
Northern Affairs

**Elders and Youth Gathering 2017
World Café Reflections Summary:
Ideas & Opportunities**
Assembly of Seven Generations
(A7G), Summer Solstice Festival
Committee, YouthREX

**I Matter. You Matter.
We Matter. Engagement Report**
We Matter Campaign

**Interim Report: Our Women
and Girls Are Sacred**
The National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls

**Qarjuit Youth Council Annual
Report 2016-2017**
Qarjuit Youth Council

**Seeding Reconciliation on
Uneven Ground: The 4Rs Approach
to Cross-Cultural Dialogue**
4Rs Youth Movement

Youth Programming Report
Métis Nation British Columbia

Principles of Reconciliation⁷

"To the Commission, reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgment of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour."⁸

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the 21st century, reconciliation between Indigenous and Settler Canada must be based on the following principles.

1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of Residential Schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

^{7,8} What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Principles_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf

“Canadians need education to see the contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit to the history, creation, and celebration of Canada. I feel it has to be on the terms of Indigenous Peoples.

I also fully believe that we need to educate everyone on the horrors, [past and present], as well as the current success and strengths of Indigenous Peoples. We are here and we struggle but we have so much to bring to this country.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

04.

Requirements

MOVING THE TRC CALL TO ACTION #66 FORWARD

4.1 Indigenous Youth Voices: as a National Non-Profit

- a. Introduction
- b. Overview of Proposed Activities
- c. Immediate Next Steps
- d. Requirements of the Federal Government

4.2 Reconciliation & Indigenous Youth Voices Network

- a. Why an Indigenous Youth Voices Network?
- b. Proposed Values and Principles
- c. How will the Network Operate?

4.3 Reconciliation & Program Areas of Multi-Year Funding for Indigenous Youth

4.1 Indigenous Youth Voices as a National Non-Profit

We propose the establishment of Indigenous Youth Voices as a permanent, arms-length, non-profit, national agency, with a mandate to inform, implement, and build on the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #66.

a) Introduction

All of our research and the time we have spent connecting with Indigenous youth, community, and other stakeholders, hearing their stories and learning about their experiences, has supported the Indigenous Youth Voices team to better understand the diverse realities of Indigenous youth in Canada. This, in turn, has allowed us to be more aware of current needs and priority areas, as well as the best practices and innovative ideas that already exist in relation to addressing these realities.

We have intentionally used the word ‘requirements’ in this section instead of the often-used term ‘recommendations.’ This came out of a discussion at the

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

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA:
CALL TO ACTION #66 (2015)**

National Youth Gathering we held in December, where participants shared their frustration and disillusionment with the many reports published about, with, and by us that clearly state what needs to be done to improve the well-being and outcomes of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Despite the countless recommendations that have often come out of these reports, it often feels like they are not taken seriously or acted upon in meaningful ways. We have had many of the answers and solutions for addressing the challenges and injustices that Indigenous youth deal with, and yet, not enough has changed for the better. Further, when action is taken, it is often with the caveat of including many stipulations, precarious or limited funding, and time limitations. Youth are at the heart of the TRC Call to Action #66 – as is justice. Indigenous youth have a right to access opportunities that go beyond basic human needs; we have a right to opportunities that support us to thrive and fulfill our dreams.

In this section, we offer the ideas and requirements that Indigenous youth have shared with us about what the TRC Call to Action #66 should fund, what is needed to fund ethically and effectively, why a network is needed, and how it could potentially operate. We start with an overview of our vision of Indigenous Youth Voices as a non-profit and share how we are inspired by the model of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. We highlight the main activities that Indigenous Youth Voices would undertake as its mandate and indicate what our

immediate next steps should be and what we require from the federal government.

The following sections 4.2 and 4.3 delve deeper into the two key functions of Indigenous Youth Voices that inform the TRC Call to Action #66 – the network element and the areas of focus for multi-year funding. These sections summarize data and information shared at the National Youth Gathering and through the survey and our community dialogue sessions; they truly represent the voices, ideas, feedback, and needs of Indigenous youth.

As we have emphasized throughout this Roadmap, what is expressed here represents just the beginning of many more conversations and gatherings that must be held in order to truly implement this Call to Action in a manner worthy of Indigenous youth. This is why we believe that in order to do justice to this task at hand, we require Indigenous Youth Voices be established as a permanent, Indigenous youth-led and youth-focused national non-profit, focused on the mandate of the TRC Call to Action #66.

CASE STUDY

ABORIGINAL HEALING FOUNDATION

About the Foundation

In 1998, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (ABH) was established as a direct outcome from *Gathering Strength – Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan*, released in 1997. The Government of Canada provided an initial \$350 million towards a healing fund to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in the Residential School System. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation managed this healing fund and by the end of its run, dispersed over \$537 million (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2014a) in funding to 1,500+ community-based initiatives (CTV News, 2016) across Canada as part of its mandate to encourage and support Indigenous-directed healing initiatives and research.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation was a unique model of a national agency designed and run by Indigenous people, focused on consciousness-raising, public education, restitution, and reconciliation. The Foundation’s initial 10-year mandate was extended multiple times before it eventually closed in 2014 after the federal government stopped funding the foundation.

“Our vision is of all who are affected by the legacy of physical, sexual, mental, cultural, and spiritual abuses in the Indian residential schools having addressed, in a comprehensive and meaningful way, unresolved trauma, putting to an end the intergenerational cycles of abuse, achieving reconciliation in the full range of relationships, and enhancing their capacity as individuals, families, communities, nations, and peoples to sustain their well-being.

Our mission is to provide resources which will promote reconciliation and encourage and support Aboriginal people and their communities in building and reinforcing sustainable healing processes that address the legacy of physical, sexual, mental, cultural, and spiritual abuses in the residential school system, including intergenerational impacts.

We see our role as facilitators in the healing process by helping Aboriginal people and their communities help themselves, by providing resources for healing initiatives, by promoting awareness of healing issues and needs, and by nurturing a broad, supportive public environment. We help Survivors in telling the truth of their experiences and being heard. We also work to engage Canadians in this healing process by encouraging them to walk with us on the path of reconciliation” (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, n.d.).

Leadership and Representation

Leadership of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation took a distinctions-based approach and was taken up by the five national Aboriginal political organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (renamed Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami in 2001), the Métis National Council, and the Native Women’s Association of Canada (Spear, 2014, 18).

Its Board of Directors represented, in fixed proportion, all three respective Indigenous groups, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis; there were 17 board members in total (Spear, 2014, 22). Nine members were appointed by the five national Aboriginal political organizations and the Government, and eight additional members were chosen by the existing board members from candidates nominated by the public-at-large (Spear, 2014, 53).

The Foundation and the board conducted itself based on recommendations and guiding principles developed by attendees of one of the first major events the Foundation held in Squamish, BC: a three-day Residential School Healing Strategy Conference (Spear, 2014, p. 58).

Main Activities of the Foundation

1. FUNDING

As a funding agency, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation funded community-based initiatives addressing the legacy and impact of Residential Schools. Examples of funded activities included healing activities out on the land, counseling, parenting skills workshops,

healing circles, violence prevention programs, and more (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2014b, p. 4). The Foundation also offered grants for program development assistance, had community support workers, and provided other clerical services in relation to their funding program to stakeholders (Spear, 2014, p. 134). The Foundation received over \$1 billion in eligible applications by 1999 (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2014b, p. 4), and dispersed over \$537 million to community initiatives over the course of its existence (CTV News, 2016).

2. RESEARCH

Part of the Foundation's mandate included research directly related to developing the knowledge base necessary for effective program design, implementation, and evaluation (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2010, p. 1). The approach that the Aboriginal Healing Foundation took was grounded in Indigenous knowledge and participatory processes that allowed Indigenous people to determine how the Foundation could respond most effectively to their needs (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2010, p. 2). The research was limited to the scope of the Foundation, which was to address the impacts of physical and sexual abuse; language and culture were not included in this definition, according to the Canadian government at that time. By 2010, the Foundation had produced 20 studies, all focused on the Residential School System and its manifestations (Spear, 2014, p. 134).

3. INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Communications was key for the Foundation to develop trust with their stakeholders and to show that the Foundation was credible and accountable for all of its activities. Consultations, conferences, reports, and newsletters were some of the communications strategies employed (Spear, 2014, p. 136).

What makes the Aboriginal Healing Foundation unique?

The Foundation was the first of its kind: a government-funded, but Indigenous-designed and -run, national arms-length agency focused on the healing of Indigenous people in Canada. As Spear states in his book, *Full Circle: The Aboriginal Healing Foundation & The Unfinished Work of Hope, Healing & Reconciliation*, "...the [Foundation] had built-in advantages, chief among them stable and relatively long-term funding (most not-for-profits subsisted year-to-year: the healing fund had a ten-year life), a degree of independence, a non-political character,

and staff drawn from communities across the country—only possible because there were resources to recruit and relocate them. Any one of these alone would have been a powerful asset: in combination they represented an unparalleled starting point for an Aboriginal agency" (Spear, 2014, p. 133). Further, while there were challenges and differences internally at times, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation is also an example of unity among and between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis working towards a common goal (Spear, 2014, p. 59).

Case Study References

- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. (2014a, September 30). *The Aboriginal Healing Foundation closes after 16 years of operation* [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/september-29-2014-press-release.pdf>
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. (2014b). *2014 Annual Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/2014-annual-report-19-sept-2014.pdf>
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. (2010). *A compendium of Aboriginal Healing Foundation research*. Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/research-compendium.pdf>
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. (n.d.) *Vision, mission, values*. Retrieved from <http://www.ahf.ca/about-us/mission>
- CTV News. (2016, April 13). *Head of defunct Aboriginal Healing Foundation laments loss of mental-health programs*. CTV News. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/head-of-defunct-aboriginal-healing-foundation-laments-loss-of-mental-health-programs-1.2858181>
- Spear, W.K. (2014). *Full circle: The Aboriginal Healing Foundation & the unfinished work of hope, healing & reconciliation*. Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/full-circle-2.pdf>

b) Overview of Proposed Activities

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES FUND

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #66 directs the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, a meaningful and sizeable investment by the Government of Canada into Indigenous communities across Canada will be required. It is integral that Indigenous youth are a part of the co-development of the Indigenous Youth Voices Fund hosted by and distributed by the Government of Canada.

“...the establishment of an Aboriginal-designed and Aboriginal-run national agency, mandated to support local community-driven healing initiatives, represented a creative and visionary departure from Ottawa business-as-usual”

(SPEAR, 2014, P. 3)⁹

We see Indigenous Youth Voices as another opportunity for the Government of Canada to once again prioritize innovative collaboration with Indigenous people, on our terms, in order to continue the much-needed work of “hope, healing, and reconciliation,” specific to Indigenous youth across the country. The story of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation is evidence that an arms-length foundation is a legitimate way that the government can show its commitment to reconciliation through concrete policy and action. While we stress the importance of a permanent fund for Indigenous Youth Voices that does not have a sunset clause, nor is dependent on a particular party being in power, we see many opportunities to learn from the successes and challenges of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Similar to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, we see Indigenous Youth Voices as facilitating community events and gatherings, undertaking an ambitious

research agenda directly related to Indigenous youth well-being and programming, and conducting community outreach and engagement. While we do not currently envision Indigenous Youth Voices as a funder, we do see Indigenous Youth Voices as playing an integral role in youth program funding by providing capacity-building support to young leaders and emerging leaders, and informing funding bodies and supporting them to address the needs of Indigenous youth through a Code of Ethics and Network Panel.

We also envision that all elements of Indigenous Youth Voices governance, including Advisors and members of the proposed Code of Ethics and Network Panel, will take an equitable, Distinctions-based approach. Similarly, any activities related to programming and outreach will take into consideration the differences as well as similarities across First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and across regions, as well as the opportunities and challenges that geographical location can present throughout all decision making. This is especially relevant for Inuit communities across Inuit Nunangat and rural/fly-in only First Nations communities.

A separate programming fund will be required to establish the multi-year funding for Indigenous youth programs in relation to Call to Action #66; how and who manages these funds should be determined in collaboration with Indigenous Youth Voices based on the knowledge from our activities as outlined here:

We delve deeper into how the Indigenous Youth Voices Network would operate and the proposed guiding principles and values, as conceived by Indigenous youth leaders, in Section 4.2.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES NETWORK

The TRC Call to Action #66 includes the establishment of “a national network to share information and best practices.” We propose three key elements of the Indigenous Youth Voices Network: National Gatherings, Community Outreach, and an integrated Communications Strategy. The Network and these three elements would work in a coordinated fashion with, and also inform, the other three elements of the Network:

⁹ <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/full-circle-2.pdf>

Research and Knowledge Translation, Capacity-Building, and the Code of Ethics and Network Panel.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GATHERINGS

The Indigenous Youth Voices Network will facilitate annual gatherings to bring Indigenous youth leaders from across Canada together to build relationships and share about progress, barriers, and opportunities in their work. Workshops would be delivered to support capacity-building, including training on priority themes like mental health and suicide prevention, public speaking, fundraising, grant writing, networking, etc.

Ceremony and cultural exchange would be incorporated, according to protocols of the hosting territory. It is imperative that the Gatherings are diverse and represents Indigenous youth from different areas, including urban, rural, and fly-in only communities across all parts of Canada. We also highlight the importance of hosting Regional and Distinctions-based gatherings to support community building, capacity building, and increased infrastructure at the regional-level, that could then inform National Gatherings and support the broader work of Indigenous Youth Voices. These gatherings are especially integral at this beginning stage of Indigenous Youth Voices, as much more consultation, engagement, and dialogue with Indigenous youth leaders needs to happen in order to move this initiative forward.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Ongoing outreach to Indigenous youth, individuals, groups, and organizations is required to continue strengthening relationships across the Indigenous Youth Voices Network and to stay in touch with existing work taking place, and with emerging ideas and priorities. This includes meaningful engagement regardless of geographical location and/or access to Internet. To ensure that Indigenous Youth Voices' work remains grounded in communities, face-to-face interactions will be critical to building relationships across the Network and making sure that youth have opportunities to get involved through a range of channels. This is particularly important for connecting with youth in fly-in communities with limited opportunities to travel and barriers to Internet connectivity. The Network has to be grounded in relationships that are developed through visits, virtual communications, and all Gatherings.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A Canada-wide communications strategy would be developed to improve information flow across the Indigenous Youth Voices Network. This would include sharing information about successes occurring in different communities and opportunities for collaboration, such as invitations to events through an Indigenous Youth Voices newsletter and social media. Funding opportunities would also be shared to increase the range of groups who are aware of them and applying. This strategy would serve to educate not only Indigenous youth on best practices, but also all others seeking to understand and provide supports to Indigenous youth.

RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

The Indigenous Youth Voices Research Team will focus on collecting, organizing, and disseminating existing research and new research being done related to Indigenous youth needs and priorities. Far too often, Indigenous communities are being researched with little to no control over how that research is being done and what it is being used for, and so we see this as being a positive step in having more control and understanding of research processes. This work could include developing a database of reports and literature in these areas to be shared with individuals, community-based organizations, funders, governments, and academia. It will also involve developing and facilitating knowledge translation strategies that can help to ensure that knowledge is making its way to the community level and not being trapped on shelves or only within academic spaces.

Similar to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, the Research Team could also advise on the non-profit's Capacity Building work (outlined next), offering insights to community groups on program evaluation techniques that are often a significant barrier to groups accessing sustainable funding.

CAPACITY BUILDING

We propose that customized support will be offered to individual youth and grassroots groups in order to help them access the resources that they need to turn their ideas into action. This includes working with young people in their communities to develop their knowledge and skills, and connecting them with relevant individual and organization mentors. Approaches will be determined according to the unique strengths,

challenges, goals, and circumstances of those we are working with. Indigenous Youth Voices will assist Indigenous youth with applications to federal funding for community-based programs on reconciliation.

CODE OF ETHICS AND NETWORK PANEL

A Code of Ethics will be developed as a framework for funding community-based youth organizations more equitably and effectively. This Code of Ethics will encompass the key learnings from our research on the current priorities of Indigenous youth and the needs of community-based youth organizations. We will also develop a bank of Indigenous youth leaders across the

Indigenous Youth Voices Network who are willing to act as selection committee panel members for funders.

These youth would inform the disbursement of any Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada funds that implicate Indigenous youth, and the co-development of the Indigenous Youth Voices Government of Canada Fund. Provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, Indigenous governments and organizations, corporations, and foundations could also contact Indigenous Youth Voices to request selection committee members to be involved with their funding delivery processes.

c) Immediate Next Steps

01. Commitment from the Government of Canada that it will implement Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #66 with a whole-of-government approach and that the Prime Minister, as the Minister of Youth, will champion this by supporting the creation and mandate of the Indigenous Youth Voices mission and vision

02. Legislate the Government of Canada Indigenous Youth Voices Fund as stated in Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 66: We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation

03. Initial funding for IYV for the following:

- a. Host inclusive Regional/Distinctions-based Gatherings that will lead to National Gatherings aiming to move the work of Indigenous Youth Voices forward
- b. Continue community engagement sessions around the mission and vision of IYV
- c. Support the knowledge translation and mobilization of existing work to date, including using data from our first national youth survey to create important documents around topics such as language and identity, suicide prevention, and community well-being
- d. Fund a backbone team to coordinate and project manage this iteration of Indigenous Youth Voices

[See pages 48 - 49](#)

04. Develop an operational and accessible online Indigenous Youth Voices Network and Platform

[See Section 4.2, starting page 58](#)

05. Distribute interim funds for youth programming by the federal government through a process led by Indigenous Youth Voices; Indigenous Youth Voices Network to participate in selection committee and funding reviews

d) Ongoing Requirements of the Federal Government

01. Commit to working closely with Indigenous Youth Voices for the creation of the Indigenous Youth Voices Government of Canada Fund and work with Indigenous Youth Voices' Code of Ethics and Network Panel to determine the government's priorities in funding Indigenous youth in Canada; this includes taking recommendations from the Panel to fund Indigenous youth ethically and based on Indigenous youth priorities

02. Continue to deepen an understanding and awareness of Indigenous people – specifically, youth. Increased and consistent education of all public servants on Indigenous people is required in order to work with us to address our requirements

03. Develop relationships with Indigenous Youth Voices Network

The Government of Canada would need to show that all funds for implementing TRC Call to Action #66 are new money and will not take away from any existing funding for any Indigenous programs and services.

It is also important for us to emphasize that unless the systemic racism and structural violence entrenched in Canada's government and institutions is addressed, the vision of, and reason for, the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #66 is greatly compromised.

Youth will not be able to truly thrive, and the implementation of this important Call to Action will not be true to its intended purpose—not without intentional and real action, including restitution, decolonization, and the affirmation and implementation of Indigenous people's right to self-determination, which includes our rights to land and self-governance.

4.2. Reconciliation & Indigenous Youth Voices Network

The second part of the TRC Call to Action #66 refers to a national network to share information and best practices. At the National Youth Gathering, youth leaders met in groups to discuss what an Indigenous Youth Voices Network could look like. Prompts included: What is the Network? How will it operate? What will it look like? Feel like?

While the Gathering represents the first steps towards establishing an official youth network, the ideas around why a network is needed, its potential guiding values, and its general operational requirements offer valuable insight, not only for moving the TRC Call to Action #66 forward, but also into the strong vision young Indigenous leaders have for themselves and their communities.

“I want children and youth to have choice; options and ways to express themselves. We’re going to work as hard as they need us to work in order for them to reach their capacity the way we know they can.”

- NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING YOUTH LEADER

“For many years, I’ve felt like I could help, like I want to help, I’ve talked about this program and that program and ‘how cool would it be if..’ ideas but nothing ever came to fruition. I feel like I don’t know where to go to inquire about ideas... It would be awesome if, say, on a website or Facebook, we could look up all the neat things going on across our territory, see who is handling it, and even further, who in our region (individual and organization) we could go to, to share ideas and get things going. I know SO many people who want to help, all in our own unique ways, but we don’t know what to do with our ideas and our fire.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

a) Why an Indigenous Youth Voices Network?

The youth participants voiced three major reasons for the establishment of a network. First, and not surprisingly, youth feel that this type of network could support and facilitate space for healing. Part of reconciliation needs to allow for healing and vulnerability in safe(r) spaces created and facilitated by Indigenous Peoples. Youth of all ages experience intergenerational trauma and the

Indigenous Youth Voices Network can be a space for youth across Nations to share, learn, and heal with each other.

Second, youth see this network as a platform from which to collectively advocate for positive change on shared issues, as identified by the members. Youth know what the challenges and opportunities in their lives and communities are. Indigenous Youth Voices is a space to advocate collectively from, while also highlighting distinctions between Nations and prioritizing processes of decolonization. Further, it is seen as a potential bridge to give information related to identified advocacy issues to government, on its own terms.

Finally, the Network could be a vehicle for resource and information sharing. Members and their allies will be able to share promising/best practices, important learnings, and information across Nations and communities.

b) Proposed Values and Principles:

Over the three-day National Youth Gathering, five distinct themes emerged around the values and principles that should guide the Network:

YOUTH-LED

Overwhelmingly, youth leaders emphasized the requirement that programs/initiatives and the Network are all youth-led. Youth know what they need, so their voices must be prioritized, especially above any political agendas.

INCLUSIVE

The Network must also be accessible to all communities that want to be engaged, whether urban, fly-in, small, and/or digitally accessible (or not). It must also be inclusive of all Indigenous youth, including those identifying as Two Spirit, Trans, and/or non-binary.

INDEPENDENCE

Distinct separation from government and related agendas must be upheld in order to protect the authenticity of Indigenous Youth Voices being youth-led. Further, any research or knowledge coming out of Indigenous Youth Voices must remain the intellectual property of Indigenous Youth Voices.

INTERGENERATIONAL

While Indigenous Youth Voices will be youth-led, Elders need to be an integral part of guiding the Network, as does ensuring that spaces and opportunities for intergenerational learning and exchange are prioritized.

LISTENING

Listening with open hearts – to youth, Elders, and each other – is essential to how Indigenous Youth Voices will operate.

These values tie in very closely with the values that we, as Advisors, came up with at the very start of our Indigenous Youth Voices journey, as we shared on page 13 of this Roadmap. We see all of these values as being integral to fueling and informing our Mission and Vision as Indigenous Youth Voices presently and in future iterations of this endeavour.

c) How Will the Network Operate?

“There has to be heart at the heart of this work. These are not just words on a paper...Who do we bring with us? It can’t just be the elites. It has to be people, grassroots. Young kids need to be able to understand this, especially if it’s going to impact their lives.”

- NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING YOUTH LEADER

While the specifics of how the Indigenous Youth Voices Network will operate are yet to be fully fleshed out, youth leaders at the Gathering emphasized three important features of how it should function.

First, there must be **multiple ways to engage and multiple channels of communication**: youth are already very connected; this network must build on existing networks across Canada to engage as many Indigenous youth and communities as possible. At the same time, the Network will support and leverage what is already being done so as to not ‘reinvent the wheel,’ and also to honour the work that is already being done in communities. Further, members should be able to engage both in online spaces and in face-to-face ways.

Second, the Network must operate in a manner that is **community-based and grassroots**. The heart of the Network must be rooted in Indigenous communities and grassroots mobilizing. Communities will decide and dictate if/how/when they engage with the Network.

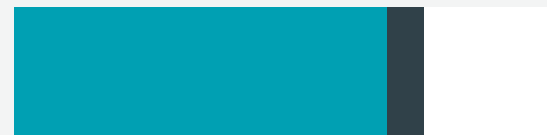
The third and final key stipulation for the Network is **funding for core staff**. A paid team is needed to support the Network and help move its agenda forward. Moreover, the Network should be embedded so that funding does not have to be reapplied for year after year, but guaranteed, regardless of government.

4.3. Reconciliation & Program Areas of Multi-Year Funding for Indigenous Youth

“I didn’t know that my mother went to Residential School until I was 19. She kept it from me for so long, but when she finally shared her story, she began to heal and so did her family. She passed down a lot of trauma to her three children, one of whom has passed because of alcoholism. She is living, breathing proof that once we begin to share, we begin to heal. This is why I picture having welcoming circles for mothers and their daughters. Why men need mentorship programs for Elders to pass their knowledge on with pride and for the young to gather responsibilities and grow up with purpose, instead of being lost and more likely to die by suicide.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Do you think it’s important for youth to have access to programs related to reconciliation?



69%

Yes

7%

No

24%

Choose not to answer

Answered: 468 youth | Skipped: 54 youth

If healing, acknowledging colonial injustices, equity, treaties, and improved relations are some of the key elements many Indigenous youth view as integral to reconciliation, what then does reconciliation-focused youth programming look like, according to Indigenous youth? At the National Youth Gathering in December 2017, participants were asked the question:

“If you could dream anything for your communities in relation to the TRC Call to Action #66, what would your top five priorities be?”

The priorities shared were largely based on each participant’s knowledge and observations from leading or attending youth forums and gatherings, and engaging with Indigenous youth through their own community-based work. The following is an overview of the program areas identified by the youth leaders as essential to Indigenous youth well-being in the context of the TRC Call to Action #66.

Program Areas of Focus for Multi-Year Funding at the Community Level

IDENTITY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE

Land-Based Learning (for language, tradition, cultures): Youth need access to different forms of land and culture-based learning/experiences (i.e. sweats, longhouse, on-the-land programming/training/camps).

Identity: Indigenous identity (Nation-specific) needs to be prioritized so that youth can learn about their history, traditional forms of governance, creation stories, etc., and feel safe to do so.

Language: Long-term language revitalization training, workshops, and learning opportunities are needed.

Cross-Cultural Programming: Programs should include opportunities for Indigenous youth to hear from each other and teach each other about their own cultures and traditions.

Arts-Based: The power of the arts was highlighted as an important way to connect with youth and support their physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, especially in relation to identity/language/culture-based learning.

NETWORKING

Participants identified the need for connections between organizations, opportunities for youth networking, and to travel and learn outside of school, and broad-based advocacy efforts by Indigenous youth across Nations. Distinctions-based exchanges were also identified as needed to strengthen connections within Nations.

LIFE PROMOTION/SUICIDE PREVENTION/ MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Cultural and land-based healing for mental health issues were emphasized, as well as a reconceptualization of suicide prevention as life promotion.

TWO-SPIRIT/LGBTQ2SIA-FOCUSED

Two-Spirit-specific education and programs are needed, and programs must be inclusive for youth who are questioning or figuring out their gender identity.

SPORTS

Youth sports programs were identified as a way to engage youth and support their holistic development in an active, play-based way.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Workshops (youth-led) and programming on topics like birth control, consent, healthy relationships, addictions, drug prevention, women empowerment/preventing violence against women were identified; participants also stressed that these programs can/should be in partnership/collaboration with existing programs/organizations.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR YOUTH LEADERS

Initiatives funding training for Indigenous youth to develop leadership skills and take on positions such as youth workers, build collaborative relationships with mentors, and facilitate workshops/programs are needed.

Many of the areas of programming suggested by the youth leaders at the National Youth Gathering also reflect the survey responses to the question about what kinds of programs youth feel they should have access to in relation to reconciliation. The survey responses indicate that while youth view the education of non-Indigenous peoples as an important part of reconciliation, they also feel strongly that Indigenous youth themselves need more access to programming related to their own education on their history, culture, and language, and traditional ways.

While the term ‘intergenerational trauma’ came up many times in the survey responses, answers also indicate that, in general, many Indigenous youth may not have a full understanding of what the generations before went through, and how those experiences of colonization and oppression have resulted in the challenges that many Indigenous communities now face. At the same time, many youth are proud of their culture and traditions, and are seeking a deeper connection with these elements of

their identity — this is especially evident as culture was one of the top things youth listed being most proud of in the survey responses to the correlating question. This again speaks back to the notion of healing — being able to learn, connect, and understand more of their histories and cultures can ultimately foster a strengthened sense of rooted identity that can help youth to thrive as proud Indigenous beings in their communities and beyond.

“I think it’s important for youth to have access to programming related to their own territory teachings, land-based knowledge, culture, and language.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Learn the truth about our history and accept the reality of what our parents went through, in which wounds was passed down to us. Breaks that cycle and empower the next generation by teaching them pride and ownership of their resilience.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Definitely stronger education on our own histories. Our part of reconciliation is knowing where we come from, understanding why our communities are the way they are.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Survey respondents also indicated that they would welcome more opportunities to learn from Elders, mentors, and peers. They are seeking to learn more about reconciliation as well as ways to better contextualize their own experiences and identities. A number of youth shared that youth councils and youth-led initiatives focused on leadership and capacity-building are also integral types of programs, both to advance reconciliation and to support and improve the well-being of Indigenous youth. This speaks directly to the whole purpose of Indigenous Youth Voices and the TRC Call to Action #66.

“Youth should be involved in events on reconciliation that empower them to bring their experiences and knowledge with them to promote change. Programs on youth leadership will be important, and need to be adequately funded to ensure access to the least fortunate.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Reconciliation’ in the sense of providing youth an

opportunity to express how they hope to change their communities and Nations. My job provides me with the luxury of meeting all kinds of youth all over the place and regardless of where I go the youth are interested in what it means to be a Nation. Even if they don’t quite know how to express it yet they want that right to have a distinct past, present, and future.”

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Safe(r) Spaces

It is important to note that in order to do any of this programming, youth-specific, safe(r) spaces are required and paramount. Youth need to feel a sense of physical and emotional safety in order to even begin engaging with programs. They need to feel safe enough to go to the physical spaces where programming is held and also feel safe enough to be able to participate fully in programs and share their experiences and struggles. Survey responses and perspectives shared at the National Youth Gathering indicate that many youth currently do not have safe spaces to go to, and welcoming, accessible physical spaces for activities and recreation is quite lacking in many Indigenous communities.

The priorities for reconciliation-focused Indigenous youth programming shared at the National Youth Gathering and via the survey echo many of the suggestions, feedback, and ideas that have been outlined in countless reports from Indigenous initiatives over the years.

As one youth leader at the Gathering noted — anyone remotely engaged in this space of Indigenous community-building or advocacy already knows what is needed, it is the actual funding and support to make these programs happen that is lacking. With that said, youth leaders at the National Youth Gathering all emphasized that these proposed programming areas require **sustainable, multi-year funding** so that we can be proactive in supporting Indigenous youth, instead of just being reactive in select crisis situations.

What Indigenous youth need are options – choices that run the gamut in terms of level of engagement and program types—so that we can meet the needs of all diverse Indigenous youth.

Further, while cross-cultural knowledge sharing and learning opportunities were highlighted, many of these programming areas also require a Distinctions-based, Nation-specific approach. A number of youth also raised the point that the building of networks within Nations is priority before merging as a national network. Investment in Distinctions-based networks, before or alongside the establishment of a national network, would meaningfully implement the Call to Action in a sustainable manner—in the interest of Indigenous nations and the greater Canada. Finally, it was also noted that increased support for existing programming that works well should be prioritized alongside funding new programs.

“All the answers and solutions are there, many of which are at the mouths and hands of youth, it’s whether or not those are actually implemented.

Also, basic Human Rights, there is no reconciliation or moving forward, or full Indigenous youth empowerment without meeting the basic human rights like water, food, shelter, and safety.”

INDIGENOUS YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENT

05. Closing Thoughts

FEARS, HOPE, AND RESPONSIBILITY

- a. Limitations and Opportunities
- b. Fear and Responsibility
- c. Moving Forward with Hope and Urgency

WAYNE K. SPEARS OPENS the book *Full Circle*¹⁰ by contextualizing the beginnings of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation as a time of “extraordinary unrest”, quoting previous National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Georges Erasmus:

“Sadly, as we head towards the 1990s, we, the people of the First Nations, have to admit that our relations with Canadian government have never been worse. Our rising expectations of recent decades, our hopes for a better future, have unfortunately turned out to be illusory, shattered by the grim reality that governments...are still not ready to work honestly with us to resolve issues that have been outstanding for centuries.”

Almost 30 years later, despite many apologies and acknowledgements, countless reports and recommendations, and an overwhelming use of the word ‘reconciliation’ by the Canadian government today,

many Indigenous people, especially Indigenous youth, still remain skeptical, if not completely disillusioned, by the notion of reconciliation.

Indigenous youth have been voicing similar concerns for their safety and well-being for generations. Their voices were part of the seminal report from the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)*, released in 1996. Indigenous youth were clearly heard and acknowledged within this federal report; at that time, they shared concerns around their loss of culture, lack of opportunities, and suicide, to name a few. If not exactly the same, these concerns are very similar to those that Indigenous youth have today. Decades later, the lives of Indigenous youth have not changed for the better – and, in many contexts, their outcomes have gotten worse.

In the RCAP report, it was estimated that over \$16 billion of taxpayer money would be misspent on services reacting to the concerns Indigenous youth have been voicing for decades – such as emergency medical services (due to a lack of proper medical and dental care, self-harm, and/or death) and social services (such as welfare, police interventions, increased rate of children in care, and incarceration, linked directly to the lack of opportunities for Indigenous youth).

¹⁰ <http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/full-circle-2.pdf>



Inuit youth at Parliament Hill in September 2017 at the National Inuit Youth Council's Celebrate Life event on World Suicide Prevention Day.

The arrogance of the Canadian government to continually ignore the solutions to these challenges that have been outlined in their own federally-recognized reports has not only impacted the lives of Indigenous youth and communities, but has also come at the expense of Canadian taxpayers. We offer this Roadmap to once again shine a light on the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Indigenous youth, for the explicit purpose of informing the TRC Call to Action #66.

a. Limitations and Opportunities

While we have outlined clear next steps and requirements, we would also like to acknowledge some of the limitations of this Roadmap, and share opportunities and areas of action that should be part of any Indigenous Youth Voices work moving forward.

First, as we have stated throughout this Roadmap, what we propose here is an articulation of a broader vision for implementing the TRC Call to Action #66. This vision is a result of what we have heard, learned, and observed from Indigenous youth throughout our tenure as Advisors. What we are presenting here is a clear path forward that is rooted in the voices of Indigenous youth, but is not meant to be a strategic planning document with every step definitively outlined – it is a Roadmap *to* the implementation of TRC Call to Action #66, not *for* the TRC Call to Action #66. It is the vision that Indigenous youth today have given to us, and it must

include Indigenous youth as equal collaborators in all phases of its plan. There is still a lot of work to be done to engage more Indigenous youth and organizations, and to concretely, equitably, and collaboratively flesh out clear objectives and processes moving forward. We stress this because one of the key challenges that we faced during our tenure as Advisors was time and capacity for intensive outreach.

Due to time and resource constraints, we were limited in the amount of outreach and engagement we were able to do. With only four months to dedicate to Indigenous youth engagement, our focus was to create a big-picture understanding of Indigenous youth views on reconciliation and how to move the TRC Call to Action #66 forward. Primarily, we tapped into our own extensive networks and relied on organizations to connect us with Indigenous youth and communities. Given more time and resources, we would have directed more focus towards outreach strategies such as increased advertising and radio announcements. We would have also invested more into targeted outreach to specific Indigenous youth communities and populations. For example, we were not able to connect deeply and specifically with Indigenous youth in care, a group of Indigenous youth whose unique voices and experiences must be part of informing the TRC Call to Action #66.

Further, we recognize that despite meeting with Métis Nation of Ontario, Métis Nation of British Columbia, Métis Settlements General Council, and individual Métis youth, Métis youth are underrepresented in the survey responses, in comparison to the number of First Nations and Inuit youth respondents. Increased targeted outreach to Métis youth is needed to inform an equitable strategy for the TRC Call to Action #66. Also, geographical location (i.e. fly-in-only communities), as well as bandwidth connectivity in certain communities, posed significant barriers to inclusive participation for some Indigenous youth in both the survey and our in-person community dialogue sessions. We were not able to engage meaningfully with youth in these communities; moving forward, this also needs to be addressed.

Finally, there is a wealth of data and information that Indigenous Youth Voices has gathered, especially from the survey, that has not been included in this Roadmap. This decision was made in the interest of keeping this Roadmap focused on reconciliation and the TRC Call to Action #66, as well as due to time and resource constraints. We hope that additional analysis and research can be done using this data so that we can further share the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous youth in Canada.

Despite these challenges and limitations, we strongly believe that what we have accomplished and what we offer in this Roadmap is a clear vision to move forward in implementing the TRC Call to Action #66. As Advisors who have long been engaged in Indigenous youth advocacy and leadership work, we were aware of many of the challenges we might face doing this work, and made every effort to mitigate these challenges to the best of our abilities. This includes outreach strategies we were able to employ, such as using radio announcements and faxing copies of the survey to be manually filled out and entered in Inuit communities. The 500-plus responses we received from the survey exemplify the fact that Indigenous youth have a lot to say and wisdom to offer, especially when it comes to informing their own well-being and that of their communities.

b. Fear and Responsibility

As exemplified throughout this Roadmap, many Indigenous youth feel a sense of responsibility to their people, culture, and all the future generations of Indigenous youth. This was especially evident in the

young leaders at the National Youth Gathering. The trauma and challenges youth experience and witness in their communities, the resilience of their people, and the sense of trust they have in their culture and traditions provide a driving force behind their commitment and desire to improve life for their people. That being said, youth also shared significant fears around both the existential future of Indigenous youth and the forces that prevent them from fully engaging with their cultures and traditional ways of living/knowing.

The leaders at the National Youth Gathering, especially, shared their worries around not being able to do enough to make life better for Indigenous children, both present and future — especially those who feel like they don't matter. Métis youth, LGBTQQ2SIA youth, non-binary youth, and those isolated – geographically or otherwise – were specifically emphasized. Our young leaders fear that some youth do not understand their Indigenous identity and suffer as a result.

In relation to Indigenous Youth Voices, and the TRC Call to Action #66 specifically, some leaders at the National Youth Gathering expressed concerns around being seen as 'sellouts' for engaging with a government-initiated project, their voices not being heard or taken seriously, and Indigenous Youth Voices being co-opted or manipulated by the government.

"I am afraid of [this work] being manipulated. Who controls this? What are they going to do with our thoughts? It can get misused. We have to make sure it is getting implemented in a good way."

- NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING YOUTH LEADER

It was also noted that, when money is involved, politicization of issues and people often happens, which youth want to avoid. Survey respondents were also wary of trusting the idea that opportunities for change were going to be real and concrete, saying, "so often it seems as though the promises made are not done with any sincerity or attached to something tangible."

"[We need to be] listened to. Taken seriously. Valued as experts of youth-specific challenges, and as having solutions. We have the answers, they just need to [be] valued and put into action."

- SURVEY RESPONDENT

Ultimately, Indigenous youth are looking for a clear path forward for the implementation of the TRC Call to Action #66, a path that embodies the integrity of our ideas, values, and guidelines. While our fears and concerns come from a very real history of disappointment and injustice that continues today, we are still hopeful that if love, connection, and youth themselves can be at the heart of implementing the TRC Call to Action #66, all Indigenous youth will have the opportunities that lead to more positive, equitable, and optimistic lives.

c. Moving Forward with Hope and Urgency

This Roadmap calls on the federal government, once again, to invest equitably in the lives of Indigenous youth.

It is not unreasonable that we ask the Government of Canada to meaningfully invest in reversing the effects of its attempt at the genocide of Indigenous Peoples. The colonial practices it implemented, alone and with its partners, in a calculated manner in Canada's short history as a state must be reversed. All Indigenous youth should be able to speak their language, carry out their cultural and traditional practices, and live the level of self-determination as experienced by our ancestors the day before a Residential School opened in Canada. Moreover, youth must have access and choice to be able to connect with and/or live on their traditional homeland. The proper implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #66 can be a success in achieving this very necessary requirement of reconciliation amongst First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth.

Indigenous youth are the experts of their own lives, and have clearly shown that they are capable of voicing their concerns and understanding their needs. Governments and organizations should always refer to documents such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *Guidelines for the Ethical Engagement of Young People* by First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, as well as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, when in doubt. For us, the urgency of this Roadmap and the implementation of the TRC Call to Action #66 is in line with that of the UNDRIP, ensuring that Indigenous youth are able to survive and thrive.

During the time of writing this report, we learned of the unjust verdicts acquitting the accused murderers of Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine. These verdicts show us, and all Canadians, that colonialism and white supremacy are still ongoing and thriving in this country. These verdicts represent just two examples of what Canada continues to tell Indigenous youth: that Canadian systems do not value our lives, that many Canadians are in desperate need of education and unlearning in order to partake in true reconciliation, and that so much healing and action must happen in order to raise up our youth and gain our trust.

Despite the fact that settler colonialism continues to inflict pain and trauma on Indigenous peoples and youth, there still remains hope for an opportunity to be part of implementing this collective vision of the TRC Call to Action #66. We continue to draw on our resilience, our ways of living and knowing, and our histories and present contexts, with the desire to lead a process that will create tangible positive change for all Indigenous youth.

The urgency is real: the baseline of well-being for Indigenous youth cannot, and must not, merely be survival. The willingness of Indigenous youth to engage with Indigenous Youth Voices, the voices and wisdom reflected in this Roadmap, and the TRC Call to Action #66 are what we offer to 'reconciliation'.

Now it is time for the Canadian government to reciprocate, and to finally act on and invest in reconciliation – **on our terms.**

“There is room on this land for all of us and there must also be, after centuries of struggle, room for justice for Indigenous peoples. That is all we ask. And we will settle for nothing less.”

ARTHUR MANUEL, UNSETTLING CANADA: A NATIONAL WAKE-UP CALL

“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 and our Aboriginal spirituality. Despite not having a land base. And despite our 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, RESILIENCE OF THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE, 1999

“We must teach our children their mother tongue. We must teach them what they are and where they come from. We must teach them the values which have guided our society over the thousands of years. We must teach them the philosophies which go back beyond the memory of man...”

JOHN AMAGOALIK, WE MUST HAVE DREAMS

06. Appendices

APPENDIX A

What We Read

- 4Rs Youth Movement. (2017). *Seeding Reconciliation on Uneven Ground: The 4Rs Approach to Cross-Cultural Dialogue*. Sault Ste. Marie, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://4rsyouth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/4Rs-Framework-Final.pdf>
- The Action Group on Access to Justice. (2016). *Indigenous Justice: Examining the Over-Representation of Indigenous Children and Youth*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from https://theactiongroup.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/TAG_Indigenous_Children_and_Youth_Exploratory_Report.pdf
- Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada as amended. (2010). Ottawa, ON: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. Retrieved from: http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/LAND_CLAIMS_AGREEMENT_NUNAVUT.pdf
- Alderman, J., Balla, S., Blackstock, C., & Khanna, N. (2006). *Guidelines for the Ethical Engagement of Young People*. Ottawa, ON: First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Retrieved from <https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Guidelines-Ethical-Youth-Engagement.pdf>
- Assembly of First Nations. (2016). *Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council Calls to Action on Life Promotion in First Nations Communities*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
- Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. (2016). *Final Report: Truth and Reconciliation Summit*. Banff, AB: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/learn-about-our-truth-and-reconciliation-summit-report>
- Baskin, C. (2007). Aboriginal youth talk about structural determinants as the cause of their homelessness. *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, 3(3), 31-42.
- Blackstock, C., Cross, T., George, J., Brown, I., & Formsma, J. (2006). Reconciliation in child welfare: Touchstones of hope for Indigenous children, youth, and families. Ottawa, ON: First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada / Portland, OR: National Indian Child Welfare Association. Retrieved from https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Touchstones_of_Hope.pdf
- Canada, Parliament, House of Commons. Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. (2017). *Breaking Point: The Suicide Crisis in Indigenous Communities*. 42nd Parl., 1st sess. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/parl/x35-1/XC35-1-1-421-9-eng.pdf
- Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat. (2005). *First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders Strengthening Relationships and Closing The Gap*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/prime_minister-ef/paul_martin/06-01-14/www.pm.gc.ca/grfx/docs/final_e.pdf
- Constitution Act, 1867* (UK), 30 & 31 Victoria, c. 3. Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-1.html>
- Corntassel, J. (2012). Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 86-101.
- Duncan, K. (2016, January 26). "Our Voices: Connecting Yukon's Youth." Retrieved from <https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/our-voices-connecting-yukons-youth>
- First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada & Native Youth Sexual Health Network. (2012). *Submission for Canada's 2nd Universal Periodic Review*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/canadassecondupr2012.pdf>
- George III, King of England. (7 October, 1763). *Royal Proclamation of 1763*. London, England: Court at St. James's.
- Government of Canada, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Makivik Corporation, Nunatsiavut Government, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (9 February, 2017). *Inuit Nunangat Declaration on Inuit-Crown Partnership*. Iqaluit, NU: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/English-Inuit-Nunangat-Declaration.pdf>
- Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Embrace Life Council & Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (2010). *Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Pangnirtung, NU: Authors. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/NSPS_final_English_Oct%202010\(1\).pdf](https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/NSPS_final_English_Oct%202010(1).pdf)
- Health Canada. (2003). *Acting on What We Know: Preventing Youth Suicide in First Nations*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/H35-4-29-2002E.pdf>
- Indian Act*, S.C. 1876, c. 18. Retrieved from <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010252/1100100010254>

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2005). *The Inuvialuit Final Agreement As Amended: Consolidated Version*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/sites/default/files/Inuvialuit%20Final%20Agreement%202005.pdf>
- Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada. (8 May, 2006). *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/IRS%20Settlement%20Agreement-%20ENGLISH.pdf>
- Institute of Governance. (1997). *Summary of the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from https://iog.ca/docs/1997_April_rcapsum.pdf
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2011). *First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.itk.ca/national-strategy-on-inuit-education/>
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2016). *National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ITK-National-Inuit-Suicide-Prevention-Strategy-2016.pdf>
- Québec (Province). (1976). *The James Bay and Northern Québec agreement*. Ottawa, ON: Indian and Northern Affairs. Retrieved from <http://www.gcc.ca/pdf/LEG00000006.pdf>
- John, E. (2016). *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions: A Report on Indigenous Child Welfare in British Columbia*. Victoria, BC: Ministry of Child and Family Development. Retrieved from <http://fns.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Final-Report-of-Grand-Chief-Ed-John-re-Indig-Child-Welfare-in-BC-November-2016.pdf>
- Kilabuk, J. (2015). *Inuit Youth Traditional Roots Land Camp*.
- Kovach, M., Carriere, J., Montgomery H., Barrett, M.J., and Gilles, C. (2015). *Indigenous presence: Experiencing and envisioning Indigenous Knowledes within selected sites of Education and Social Work*. Retrieved from <https://www.usask.ca/education/documents/profiles/kovach/Indigenous-Presence-2014-Kovach-M-et-al.pdf>
- Kral, M.J., Salusky, I., Inuksuk, P., Angutimarik, L., & Tulugardjuk, N. (2014). Tunnajuq: Stress and resilience among Inuit youth in Nunavut, Canada. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 51(5), 673-692.
- Kroes, G. (2008). *Aboriginal Youth in Canada: Emerging Issues, Research Priorities, and Policy Implications*. Ottawa, ON: Policy Research Initiative. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/policyresearch/PH4-50-2009E.pdf
- Laidlaw Foundation. (2011). *Foundations & Pipelines: Building Social Infrastructure to Foster Youth Organizing*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://laidlawfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Foundations-Pipelines.pdf>
- Laidlaw Foundation. (2011). *Ground Floors: Building Youth Organizing Platforms*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from http://laidlawfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/GroundFloors_BuildingYouthOrganizingPlatforms_v2-1.pdf
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2004). *Land Claims Agreement Between the Inuit of Labrador and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Newfoundland and Labrador and Her Majesty The Queen In Right Of Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nunatsiavut.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Labrador-Inuit-Land-Claims-Agreement.pdf>
- Métis Nation British Columbia. (2017). *Youth Programming Report*. Surrey, BC: Author. Retrieved from https://www.mnbc.ca/app/webroot/uploads/MYBC_page/MNBC_-_Youth_Programming_Report_16-17.pdf
- Métis Settlements General Council. (2016). *Métis Settlements Strategic Summary Report*. Edmonton, AB: Author.
- Morantz, A. (n.d.). *Aboriginal Youth Issues*. Kingston, ON: Queen's School of Business.
- National Aboriginal Health Organization. (2005). *Assessment and Planning Tool Kit for Suicide Prevention in First Nations Communities*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from http://www.npaihb.org/images/epicenter_docs/suicide_prevention/2008/First%20Nation%20ToolKit%20for%20SuicidePrev.pdf
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2017). *Our Women and Girls Are Sacred: Interim Report*. Vancouver, BC: Privy Council Office. Retrieved from <http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/files/ni-mmiwg-interim-report-en.pdf>
- National Inuit Youth Council. (2010-2015). *Nipiit: Canada's Inuit Youth Magazine* (1-11). Ottawa, ON: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Retrieved from <https://issuu.com/nipiit>
- National Inuit Youth Council & Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (2017). *National Inuit Youth Summit: July 31st – August 4th, 2017*. Nain, Nunatsiavut: Author.
- Native Montreal. (2015). *Make Yourself Heard: Report of the Aboriginal Youth Forum in Montreal*. Montreal, PQ: Author. Retrieved from http://www.nativemontreal.com/media/Publications/Youth_forum_report_make_yourself_heard_2016_taille_reduite.pdf

- Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council of the Chiefs of Ontario. (2016). *Youth Voices Survey Summary*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Youth%20Voices%20Survey%20Summary%20%28COO%20-%20TB%20Inquest%29.pdf>
- Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. (2014). *Feathers of Hope: A First Nations Youth Action Plan*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/Feathers_of_Hope.pdf
- Qarjuit Youth Council. (2016-2017). *Annual Report 2016-2017*. Kuujuaq, PQ: Author.
- Qikiqtani Inuit Association. (2013). *Qikiqtani Truth Commission Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatiqingniq*. Iqaluit, NU: Author. Retrieved from https://www.qtcommission.ca/sites/default/files/public/thematic_reports/thematic_reports_english_final_report.pdf
- Rainbow Health Ontario. (July 2016). *Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous Health*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2SLGBTQINDIGENOUSHEALTHFactheet.pdf>
- TakingITGlobal. (2016). *Indigenous Youth Advisory Circle Idea Book*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://explore150.tigweb.org/en/ideabook>
- TakingITGlobal. (2017). *Insights from the Circles of Change: Indigenous Youth Leadership Forum*. Toronto, ON: Author. Retrieved from <https://takingitglobal.uberflip.com/i/936360-circles-of-change-report/0?m4=>
- Taylor Newberry Consulting. (2013). *Coming Together for Children and Youth in Iqaluit: The Process, The Story, The Strategy*. Guelph, ON: Author.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit. (2016). *National Urban Inuit Community Dialogue: Supporting Local Champions*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://tungasuvvingatinuit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Urban-Inuit-Community-Dialogue-EN.pdf>
- United Nations. (1990). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- United Nations. (2008). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- Urban Native Youth Association. (2004). *Two-Spirit Youth Speak Out!* Vancouver, BC: Author. Retrieved from <http://unya.yikesite.com/downloads/glbtc-two-spirit-report-2004.pdf>
- We Matter Campaign. (2017). *I Matter. You Matter. We Matter. Engagement Report*. Toronto, ON: Author.
- White, J., & Jodoin, N. (2003). *Aboriginal Youth: A Manual of Promising Suicide Prevention Strategies*. Calgary, AB: Centre for Suicide Prevention. Retrieved from <https://cmho.org/documents/res-prom-stat-en.pdf>
- Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange. (2017). *Elders and Youth Gathering 2017 World Café Reflections Summary: Ideas & Opportunities*. Ottawa, ON: Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G). Retrieved from http://www.a7g.ca/uploads/9/9/9/1/99918202/elders_and_youth_2017_world_cafe_summary.pdf

APPENDIX B

Who We Engaged

Summary

Between August 31, 2017 and December 31, 2017, Indigenous Youth Voices Advisors travelled across the country to speak with Indigenous youth and hear their concerns. Over the course of four months, the Advisors attempted to meet with as many Indigenous communities that they could, including on reserve and off reserve.

List of Organizations

- 4Rs
- Aboriginal Youth Opportunities
- Assembly of First Nations
- Assembly of First Nations
National Youth Council
- Assembly of Seven Generations
- Blue Quills
- Canadian Federation of Students
- Canadian Roots Exchange
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
Youth Representatives
- First Nations Child and Family
Caring Society of Canada
- Hamlet of Kugluktuk
- Indspire
- Jaanimmarik High School
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Métis Nation of British Columbia
- Métis Settlements General Council
- National Association of Friendship Centers
- National Inuit Youth Council
- Native Women's Association of Canada
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Nunavik Sivunitsavut
- Nunavut Sivuniksavut
- Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
- Our Voices
- Qarjuit Youth Council — University of Saskatchewan
Indigenous Students Council
- We Matter
- Youth for Lakes
- Youth Opportunities Fund
- Youth from: Gift Lake, Fishing Lake, and
Kikino Settlements, and Kuujuaq

APPENDIX C

What We Asked

National Online Survey

1. Indigenous Nation

OPEN-ENDED

2. Current Community That You Are Living In

OPEN-ENDED

3. Age

OPTIONS: 0-10; 11-15; 16-20; 21-25; 26-30

4. Gender

OPTIONS: Male; Female; Two-Spirit;
Non-binary; Prefer not to say

5. Current Occupation (e.g. Student, Employment, Other)

OPEN-ENDED

6. Preferred Language(s)

OPEN-ENDED

7. Do you speak your Indigenous language?

OPTIONS: Yes; No; Trying to learn

8. If you answered 'Yes' or 'Trying to learn,' what has supported your learning of this language? If you answered 'No,' what could improve your learning of this language?

OPEN-ENDED

9. Completed Level of Education

OPTIONS: Below grade 8; Some high school; High school graduate; Some college or university; College or university graduate; Graduate school

10. Was your experience in school positive?

OPTIONS: Yes; No; It's complicated;
Choose not to answer

OPEN-ENDED: Please explain (if you feel comfortable)

11. Have you ever been in foster care?

OPTIONS: Yes; No; Choose not to answer

12. What strengths do you see in your community? What are you proud of?

OPEN-ENDED

13. What challenges are faced by your community? What causes the most harm?

OPEN-ENDED

14. Do you have any possible solutions to address these challenges and harm? If so, please describe.

OPTIONS: Yes; No

OPEN-ENDED: Comments

15. Does your community have a youth council/organization/group that provides youth activities? If yes, please share who.

OPTIONS: Yes; No

OPEN-ENDED: Comments

16. How do youth in your community gather/get heard/organize activities? Check all that apply.

OPTIONS: Through school activities; Through youth council/organization/groups; Through family connections; Through spiritual or faith-based communities; Through online/social media communities; We don't gather/get heard/organize activities

OPEN-ENDED: Other (please specify)

17. What youth activities would you like to have access to in your community? Check all that apply.

OPTIONS: Music, arts, drama; Sports and athletics; Cultural learnings; Science and tech classes; Spiritual or faith-based groups; Employment/skill development; No organized activities; Language activities

OPEN-ENDED: Other (please specify)

**18. What makes you feel safe in your community?
Check all that apply.**

OPTIONS: Presence of family; Presence of spiritual or faith-based community; Presence of law enforcement; Presence of friends; Presence of Elders and cultural supports; I don't feel safe in my community

OPEN-ENDED: Other (please specify)

19. The Canadian Government has committed to “reconciliation” with Indigenous peoples as a key priority. This means that they are attempting to improve the relationship between Indigenous peoples, the Government, and Canadians. Is reconciliation important to you? Why or why not? Please describe.

OPTIONS: Yes; No; Not sure

OPEN-ENDED: Comments

20. How do you think that you and/or other Indigenous youth could be better supported and empowered?

OPEN-ENDED

21. Do you think it is important for youth to have access to programs related to reconciliation? If so what kinds of programs?

OPTIONS: Yes; No; Choose not to answer

OPEN-ENDED: Comments

22. In your own words, what does reconciliation mean and look like to you?

OPEN-ENDED

23. Is there anything else you would like to share?

OPEN-ENDED

24. Would you like to receive updates or get involved with the Indigenous Youth Voices network? If so, please leave your name and contact information.

OPEN-ENDED

Social & Economic Inequality in Inuit Nunangat

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN INUIT NUNANGAT

Many Inuit face social and economic inequities that impact our health and wellbeing

INUIT NUNANGAT

\$23,485 The median individual income for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat¹

52% of Inuit in Nunangat live in crowded homes*¹

34% of Inuit aged 25 to 64 in Inuit Nunangat have earned a high school diploma¹

70% of Inuit households in Nunavut do not have enough to eat²

30 The number of physicians per 100,000 population in Nunavut⁴

47.5% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are employed¹

72.4 years The average life expectancy for residents in Inuit Nunangat¹⁵

12.3 The infant mortality rate per 1000 for Inuit infants in Canada.⁶



ALL CANADIANS

\$92,011 The median individual income for non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat¹

9% of non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes*¹

86% of all Canadians aged 25 to 64 have earned a high-school diploma¹

8% of all Canadian households do not have enough to eat³

119 The mean number of physicians per 100,000 population in Urban Health Authorities⁴

60.2% of all Canadians are employed¹

82.9 years The average life expectancy for all Canadians⁵

4.4 The non-Indigenous infant mortality rate per 1000 for Canada.⁶

