



Canadian Youth Reconciliation Barometer

2019

Final Report

**Environics
Institute**
For Survey Research



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Introduction

Background

Canada's relationship with the Indigenous Peoples who first inhabited this land continues to be unresolved and fraught with controversy. While today's reality is much improved from that of previous generations, there are currently a host of outstanding issues, including substandard living conditions on northern reserves, the need for education reform in Indigenous communities, proposed pipelines crossing native lands, treaty rights, and land claims.

Significant steps have been taken over the past decade (Federal government apology in 2008, release of the TRC Calls to Action in 2015, Trudeau Government commitments in 2015-16) that have created a window of opportunity and hope for true progress down the path of reconciliation.

In 2019, where do we stand? The past few years have witnessed many expressed commitments of good will and intent, dialogues and discussions have taken place, and new programs launched. At the same time, it is unclear what impact these efforts have had, and what progress has been achieved with respect to the awareness, attitudes and actions of individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Within this context it is important to consider the perspective of the country's youth – the emerging generation on whose shoulders the promise and challenges of reconciliation rest most directly.

How do the country's youth – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – view the promise and challenges of reconciliation in 2019. Are they paying attention and are they engaged, within their own community and with those in the other population? Is this changing over time? Up to now, there has been no empirically-based evidence to answer these questions.

Canadian Youth Reconciliation Barometer

The Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with Canadian Roots Exchange and the Mastercard Foundation, created the Canadian Youth Reconciliation Barometer as a new social research initiative to establish benchmark indicators for the state of reconciliation among the country's youth. The primary objective of this research is to generate credible, independent, empirically-derived evidence that will be broadly accepted across Canadian sectors and communities.

Such information is intended to serve as point of common ground that brings different stakeholders together, and as a means of measuring progress (or the lack of) over time.

The research focuses on the beliefs, attitudes, priorities, behaviors, and experiences as they pertain to relevant dimensions of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, and reconciliation in particular. This study will establish benchmarks that provide a definitive measure of the state of reconciliation among Canada's youth as a whole and within specific population segments. It will produce a set of indicators that can then be used in future surveys to build upon the benchmark as a means of charting trends at a national level, as well as within specific communities of interest.

The inaugural research in 2019 consisted of a survey conducted online between March 22 and April 29, 2019, with representative samples of 682 Indigenous and 695 non-Indigenous youth (ages 16 to 29), distributed across the 10 provinces and three territories. The sample was stratified to ensure representation by region, community type (urban-rural, on-reserve), age sub-cohort, gender, and Indigenous group (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), based on the most current population statistics (2016 Census). The survey was conducted in English and French (as per respondent's preference).

About this report

The following sections of the report present the results from the survey, with a focus on comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, as well as how they vary across relevant segments of each population (e.g., by gender, age, region). In addition to the focus on reconciliation, the report also examines the life aspirations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

Detailed data tables are available under separate cover, which present the results for all survey questions by population demographics and other relevant characteristics (see the study project page at www.environicsinstitute.org). All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support from a number of individuals and organizations. The Environics Institute would like to acknowledge the substantive contributions of its lead partners, Canadian Roots Exchange (Max FineDay, Lindsay Dupré, Jessica Alegria) and the Mastercard Foundation (Jennifer Brennan); the Government of Canada for its financial support; the research team at Maru/Blue (Chris Andaya, Michael Theophile-Uruena); and, finally, the 1,377 youth across Canada who took the time to share their background, experiences and perspectives which collectively inform our understanding of the state and promise of reconciliation in our country today.

Executive summary

The results of this survey reveal that youth in Canada as a whole are aware and engaged when it comes to the history of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations and reconciliation in particular. Moreover, there is a striking alignment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth on many of the issues covered in this research. While Indigenous youth are more apt to express definitive views, the gap with their non-Indigenous counterparts is in many cases is not significant; the similarities in perspective stand out much more than the differences.

Both populations generally agree about the country's colonial legacy of mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples, the importance of making positive changes and the obstacles that stand in the way, about what reconciliation is all about, and a shared optimism about realizing reconciliation in their lifetime. Moreover, involvement in reconciliation activities appears to be making a positive difference in both knowledge and outlook.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada share the same broad life goals, which include a successful or meaningful career, family and children, financial independence, and living a balanced life, with Indigenous youth placing greater emphasis on educational goals. Both populations express confidence in achieving at least some of their goals, but highlight both financial and emotional pressures as the greatest obstacles to having a good life.

The following are key conclusions from the research.

Connections between populations

Youth in Canada have a considerable amount of connection and interaction with people in the other population, although this is predictably much more common among Indigenous youth given they comprise a small minority within broader Canadian society.

Three quarters of Indigenous youth report often having frequent contact with non-Indigenous people, with very few indicating this rarely or ever happens (even among those who live on reserve, although the frequency is somewhat lower). Non-Indigenous youth are much less likely to have regular

contact with Indigenous people, although more than four in ten say this happens occasionally if not often (it is most prevalent among those living in the Prairie Provinces, while much less so in central and eastern Canada). Roughly one in five non-Indigenous youth reports no contact with the other population, and most in this group has little if any awareness of Indigenous Peoples in the community where they live.

Beyond basic contact with the other population, such interaction in many cases involves meaningful connection in terms of close friendships. More eight in ten Indigenous youth say they have one or more close friends who are non-Indigenous, while one in four non-Indigenous youth reports having close Indigenous friends (and this proportion rises to two-thirds among those who have frequent contact with the other population).

Youth who interact with individuals from the other population say the experience is generally positive. For Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike, nine in ten say they feel comfortable interacting with the other population most if not all of the time (although Indigenous youth are more likely to say this is always the case). In such interactions, Indigenous youth more likely than not feel they are respected for who they are as an Indigenous person and to a lesser extent for their culture. And among non-Indigenous youth, relatively few say they mostly or always feel self-conscious around Indigenous Peoples (e.g., about saying the wrong thing that may give offence). Positive interactions tend to be more common among youth who have frequent contact and friends in the other population.

Perspectives on the place and treatment of Indigenous Peoples

Youth in Canada express varied opinions about the current state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. But notably, among Indigenous youth the balance of opinion is clearly in the positive direction, while non-Indigenous youth are more evenly divided. Both populations are largely in agreement that such relations are more likely to have improved than deteriorated over the past

decade, but a plurality see no clear change either way. And Indigenous youth are mindful of the negative impressions and stereotypes of their Peoples that persist within broader Canadian society, with fewer than half seeing evidence that such impressions have improved in recent years.

The survey reveals a striking alignment between the two populations in their view that Indigenous Peoples experience ongoing discrimination in the country today, although Indigenous youth are more likely to say this happens often. Both populations tend to see this treatment stemming more from the attitudes and prejudice of individuals rather than from the country's laws and institutions, although a noticeable minority say that both are equally at play. Two-thirds of non-Indigenous youth express awareness of Indian residential schools, and among this group eight in ten acknowledge that the current challenges facing Indigenous communities today is to at least some extent a result of government policies such as residential schools.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth also largely agree on the need to address the legacy of colonization and mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and specifically in terms of reducing the socio-economic inequities, incorporating Indigenous perspectives on community, land and culture, and improving non-Indigenous Canadians' understanding of the history of Indigenous Peoples. Many non-Indigenous youth recognize barriers to progress in the form of government policies and public attitudes, but one-third also believe that Indigenous Peoples themselves are mostly or in part responsible for their own circumstances.

Perspectives on reconciliation

Most youth in Canada have some familiarity with the concept of reconciliation, although this familiarity is stronger among Indigenous youth (who are twice as likely to say they are very familiar with it). In terms of what reconciliation means to them, the most common themes pertain to rebuilding relationships and trust, apology and making amends, and correcting past wrongs. Notably, these same themes have equal prominence among Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike. Many in both populations report having seen or heard about specific examples of progress toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples (either where they live or elsewhere in

the country), in the form of apologies, government actions, education initiatives, and cultural programs.

What do youth see as barriers to reconciliation? Among a list of eight, Indigenous youth are most likely to point to myths and stereotypes about what Indigenous Peoples receive from Canada and a lack of political leadership to implement real change, followed by a lack of knowledge among non-Indigenous people, inadequate Indigenous control over lands and resources, socio-economic inequities, and an unwillingness to accommodate the needs of the other population. Least apt to be seen as a major barrier to reconciliation are different worldviews or values, and inadequate Indigenous control over the education of children and youth. Non-Indigenous youth rate these barriers in a similar rank order but are less likely to consider each of them to be major, with the exception of socio-economic inequities where the two populations share the same view.

These obstacles notwithstanding, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are generally optimistic about the prospects for meaningful reconciliation in their lifetimes, and a notable minority believe that they as individuals can make a difference in contributing to this outcome (although a larger proportion say it is too early to know at this point in their lives). One-third of Indigenous youth and half as many non-Indigenous youth report having been involved in some type of reconciliation activity (e.g., cultural activities, education, community events), and roughly half of those not already involved express some interest in doing so. Youth who have had such involvement stand out as being much more knowledgeable and positive about reconciliation and their own potential role in its achievement.

Finally, reconciliation and Indigenous issues in Canada have been a topic of discussion between many who have friends in the other population, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are most likely to describe such interactions as meaningful rather than as frustrating, uncomfortable, or superficial. What Indigenous youth would most like non-Indigenous people to understand about their Peoples is that they are equal and not so different, and about their history and culture, (including the mistreatment and trauma of racism and colonialism). Non-indigenous youth, in turn, would most like to know more about Indigenous Peoples' history and culture, and how they live (although most did not identify anything they wanted to know in response to this question).

Life goals and aspirations

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada share the same broad life goals, which include a successful or meaningful career, family and children, financial independence, and living a balanced life. By comparison, goals related to Indigenous or ethnic-heritage connections are somewhat less prominent.

Most youth feel confident about achieving at least some of these life goals, based on their personal drive and support from others. Two-thirds identify one or more people in their lives who have helped them in the role of teacher or mentor, most likely a parent, other family member, or teacher. Insufficient financial resources is by far the biggest obstacle to success identified by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, followed by emotional challenges (most notably stress, fear, anxiety, and a lack of motivation), and limited educational or job opportunities. Confidence in achieving life goals is strongly linked to both overall life satisfaction and to knowledge of one's family tree.

How perspectives vary across the country.

The conclusions outlined above hold true across the youth population, and the survey samples were not constructed to support an in-depth analysis of each population. Yet some notable differences by group are apparent, as follows:

GENDER. There is a modest but consistent gender difference, with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women being somewhat more knowledgeable and definitive in their views on many of the topics covered in the survey. Compared with men, they tend to be less positive about the current state of relations in Canada and more definitive about the need for change; more knowledgeable about reconciliation and likely to believe they can make a contribution, but also more cognizant about barriers and less optimistic about the future. Young women are also more likely to have frequent contact with the other population, and (in the case of Indigenous women), have more close friends who are non-Indigenous.

REGION. Across the country, perspectives stand out most noticeably in the Prairie Provinces (especially Saskatchewan and Manitoba) where the Indigenous population is the most prominent. Indigenous youth in this region are more

likely than those elsewhere to have connections with non-Indigenous people and at the same time are the most negative about the current relations and treatment of their Peoples in Canada. They are also most likely to report involvement in reconciliation activities while less apt to feel they can make a meaningful difference.

Non-Indigenous youth in the Prairies are among the most familiar with Indian residential schools, but also comparatively less sympathetic to this legacy and the most likely to express the view that Indigenous Peoples expect too much when it comes to acknowledging the past. Non-Indigenous youth in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada are among the most positive, but also less likely to consider themselves well-informed about the history and issues.

CONNECTION AND FRIENDSHIPS. Having frequent contact with people in the other population (including close friends) is closely linked to a more engaged and positive perspective about relations and reconciliation. Indigenous youth with such connections are more apt to emphasize the current challenges and obstacles facing their People, but also express optimism and agency with respect to reconciliation. Non-Indigenous youth who have frequent connections and friendships with Indigenous Peoples are more likely to feel knowledgeable about the history and supportive of change, as well as engaged with reconciliation.

INVOLVEMENT WITH RECONCILIATION ACTIVITIES. Getting involved with reconciliation on a personal level appears to be making a positive impact on how youth in Canada relate to Indigenous issues and reconciliation in particular. While a survey of this type cannot establish cause and effect relationships, the results reveal a strong link between involvement in reconciliation activities and an informed, positive perspective, such as prioritizing the reduction of socio-economic inequities, valuing Indigenous perspectives on community, land and resources, feeling optimistic about the future of reconciliation, and believing in one's ability to make a difference. Among non-Indigenous youth, those who have gotten involved in reconciliation activities are among the most likely to know about residential schools and to acknowledge this legacy is a major contributor to the current challenges facing Indigenous Peoples today.

Indigenous – non-Indigenous connections

Extent of connection

Most Indigenous youth in Canada have frequent or occasional contact with non-Indigenous people, including close friends. By comparison, fewer than half of non-Indigenous youth have such contact with Indigenous Peoples, and this is less likely to include people of the same age or friendships.

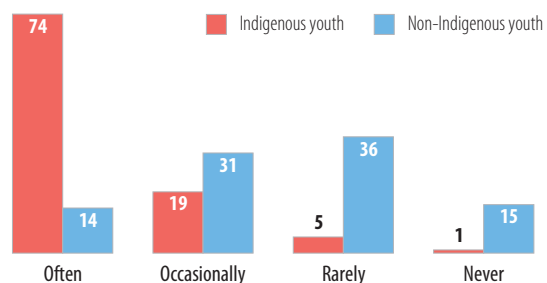
FREQUENCY OF CONTACT. The survey asked about the extent to which youth have contact with people from the other population. Given the relative size of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Canada, it is not surprising that most (74%) Indigenous youth say they often have contact with non-Indigenous people in Canada, compared with 19 percent who describe it as occasional, and only six percent who say it is rare or never. Frequent interaction with non-Indigenous Canadians is the norm across the country, but is most common among women (79% often have such contact), Métis (79%), urban dwellers (78%) and those living in the Prairie Provinces (78%), and least so among those living on reserve (57%).

Non-Indigenous youth are not as likely to interact with Indigenous Peoples, but it is perhaps more common than many may assume. More than four in ten report their contact with Indigenous people to be often (14%) or occasional (31%), compared with those who say it is rarely (36%) or never (15%).

Such contact is most widespread in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (82% often or occasional) and Alberta (70%), and least so in Ontario (35%) and Quebec (32%; with another 30% indicating they never interact with Indigenous Peoples). Frequent or occasional contact with Indigenous Peoples is also more common among women and those who identify as white. With this population, urban and rural youth are equally as likely to report having often or occasional contact with Indigenous Peoples, but the latter group are also twice as likely to say they never do so (22%, versus 11%).

CONTACT WITH OTHERS IN SAME AGE GROUP. How much of this inter-population contact is with people one's

Frequency of contact with other population



Q.11
How frequently do you have contact with [Indigenous/non-Indigenous] people?

own age versus those who are older? Among Indigenous youth, one-third (35%) report that all or most of the Non-Indigenous people they interact with are in their own general age group, compared with half (48%) who say some are, and only 16 percent who say it is only a few or none. Connections with age peers is most common among urban residents, those ages 18 to 22, and Métis; and least evident among those ages 16 to 17 and rural residents.

By comparison, non-Indigenous youth contact with Indigenous Peoples is much less likely to be with those of the same age. Fewer than one in five (18%) reports that all or most of such contacts are with Indigenous Peoples their own age, compared with four in ten who say it is only a few or none. This experience is generally similar for non-Indigenous youth across the country, although peer group contact is most evident among those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples (a pattern also evident among Indigenous youth).

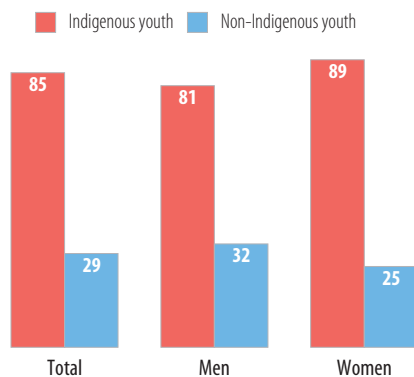
HAVE CLOSE FRIENDS? Coming into contact with people from the other population is one thing, but does this involve meaningful relationships? Among Indigenous youth that have any interaction with non-Indigenous people, a large majority (85%) say they have one or more close friends who are non-Indigenous. This is generally the case across the population, but such friendships are most widespread among women, urban residents, and British Columbians, and less so among First Nations (especially those on reserve), and those who live in Quebec.

Along with lower levels of contact, non-Indigenous youth are much less apt to have close Indigenous friends. Among those who have any contact with Indigenous Peoples, just under three in ten (29%) report to have one or more such friends. Such friendships are most commonly reported in Alberta, youth who identify as white, and urban residents. Unlike with Indigenous youth, however, it non-Indigenous men who are more likely than women to report such friendships. As might be expected, the non-Indigenous youth most likely to have close friendships with Indigenous Peoples are the ones who have the most frequent contact with this population (66%).

AWARENESS OF A LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY. Non-Indigenous youth who report *no* contact with Indigenous Peoples (19% of this population) were asked about their familiarity with Indigenous Peoples in their community. Of this group, just over one in ten (13%) says he or she is aware of an Indigenous community space or neighbourhood in his or her city or town. Of the remainder, fewer than one in four (23%) knows that any Indigenous Peoples live in his or her city or town. This translates into the following: Of the one in five non-Indigenous youth in Canada who has no contact with Indigenous Peoples, two thirds (or 13% of this population) are unaware of the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the general vicinity of where they live.

Have close friends in other population

Those with any contact, by gender



Q.13

Do you have any close friends who are [Indigenous/non-Indigenous]?

Experience of connection

Most youth feel comfortable dealing with the other population. Indigenous youth more often than not feel they and their culture are respected when interacting with non-Indigenous people, and relatively few non-Indigenous youth are usually self-conscious with Indigenous Peoples.

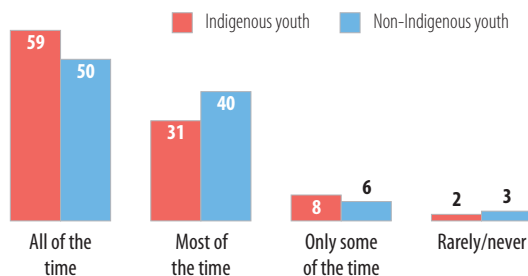
LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH INTERACTIONS. For those youth who come into contact with people from the other population, what is the level of comfort with these interactions? For Indigenous youth, the experience is mostly positive. Nine in ten say they are comfortable with such interactions all (59%) or most (31%) of the time, compared with those who indicate only some of the time (8%) or rarely or never (2%).

Feeling such comfort all of the time is most widespread among urban residents and less so among youth living on reserve, and is also a function of the frequency of such contact and having close friends (discomfort with such interactions is much most evident among those with no close non-Indigenous friends (30%)).

Similarly, non-Indigenous youth are also mostly comfortable with their interactions with Indigenous Peoples. Nine in ten say this is the case all (50%) or most (40%) of the time, compared with those who say only some of the time (6%), or rarely or never (3%). Experience is similar across the population, but feeling comfortable with Indigenous Peoples all of the time is somewhat more common among those who identify as white and live in Ontario, and least so in Alberta.

As with Indigenous youth, comfort with such interactions is linked to frequent contact and having close friends, although not quite as strongly (only 11% of non-Indigenous youth who have no close Indigenous friends say they feel discomfort at least some of the time).

Feel comfortable interacting with other population



Q.16

In general, would you say you are comfortable interacting with [Indigenous/non-Indigenous] people?

FEEL RESPECTED FOR ONE’S IDENTITY AND CULTURE.

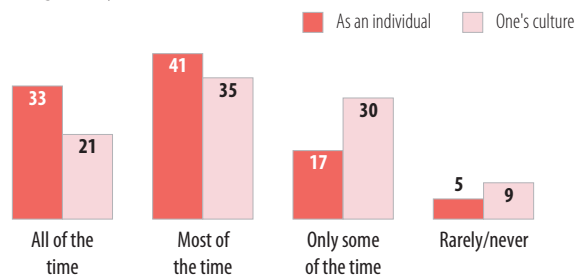
Given the country’s history of colonialism and poor treatment of Indigenous Peoples, do Indigenous youth feel they and their culture are properly respected when interacting with broader society? More often than not the answer is yes, but more so in the case of themselves as an individual than of their culture.

Three-quarters of Indigenous youth say they feel they respected or accepted for who they are as an individual by non-Indigenous people all (33%) or most (41%) of the time. The remainder say this occurs only some of the time (17%) or less often (9%). Positive responses are the norm across this population, but negative experiences are more evident among youth living on reserve, those without a high school diploma and residents of the Prairie Provinces. As well, experiences of not feeling respected as an individual are linked to the frequency of contact with non-Indigenous people and having close friends from this population.

Indigenous youth are less apt to feel they are respected in their interactions with non-Indigenous people all (21%) or most (35%) of the time when it comes to their culture. Another 30 percent say this occurs only some of the time, while one in six feels this way rarely (9%) or never (6%).

Experiences with one’s culture being respected at least most of the time is generally consistent across the population, but somewhat more evident among men, youth with a post-secondary degree, and urban residents. Having non-Indigenous friends makes the most difference (60% among those with one or more such friends feel their culture is respected all or most of the time, compared with only 35% of those who do not). As might be expected, feeling respected for both oneself and one’s culture is more widely reported among those who are most comfortable interacting generally with non-Indigenous people.

Feel respected by non-Indigenous people
Indigenous youth



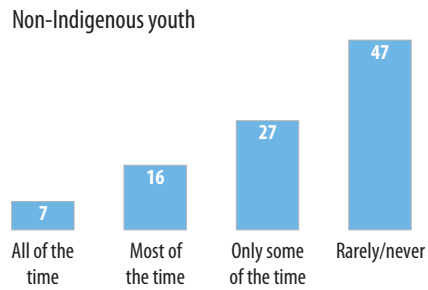
Q.17/18
[INDIGENOUS ONLY] When interacting with non-Indigenous people, how often would you say you feel respected or accepted for who you are as an individual? When interacting with non-Indigenous people, how often would you say your culture is respected?

FEELING SELF-CONSCIOUS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

To what extent do non-Indigenous youth feel self-conscious around Indigenous Peoples, such as having concerns around saying the wrong thing? This clearly happens but does not appear to be the norm. Fewer than one in four non-Indigenous youth says he or she feels self-conscious or concerned about saying the wrong thing in such interactions all (7%) or most (16%) of the time. The remainder indicate this is happens only some of the time (27%), or rarely or never (47%).

The frequency of this type of experience is notably similar across the population, but somewhat more common among non-Indigenous youth who are racialized (30% say they feel this way all or most of the time, compared with 19% of those who identify as white). Notably, this experience is actually more common among those who have the most frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, including close friends.

Feel self-conscious around Indigenous Peoples



Q.19
[NON-INDIGENOUS] When you interact with Indigenous people, how often do you feel conscious or concerned about unintentionally saying the wrong thing or causing offence?

Sources of information about Indigenous Peoples

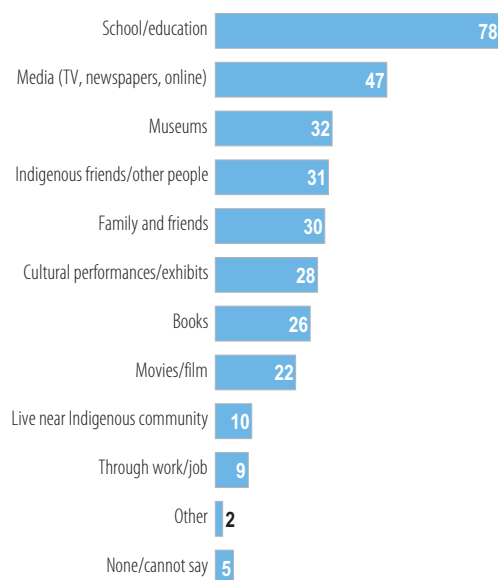
Non-Indigenous youth identify a range of sources of information and knowledge about Indigenous Peoples and their culture, but first and foremost what they have learned is through their education, followed by the media, museums, and from Indigenous friends and contacts.

Where do non-Indigenous youth get their information and understanding about Indigenous Peoples and their culture? In responding to a list of possible sources, this population most widely identifies their education and school experience (74%), followed by the media (47%), museums (32%) and from Indigenous friends and other contacts they have had (31%).

Others say they have learned about Indigenous Peoples and their culture through their own family and friends (30%), cultural performances and exhibits (28%), books (26%), movies and films (22%), while one in ten (10%) indicates his or her understanding comes in part from living near an Indigenous community. Only five percent were unable to name at least one source for what they know about Indigenous Peoples.

Sources of knowledge about Indigenous Peoples and their culture are notably similar across this population, with education being the most common one across all identifiable groups, followed by the media. As would be expected, non-Indigenous youth who have friends and frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples are much more likely to emphasize learning from directly from this source.

Sources of information about Indigenous Peoples Non-Indigenous youth



Q.30
[NON-INDIGENOUS] From where, or from whom, have you learned what you know about Indigenous Peoples and their culture?

Perspectives on Indigenous – non-Indigenous relations

Overall state of relations

There is no consensus on the overall state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada today, but notably it is Indigenous youth who are more positive about current relations and the direction of change in recent years.

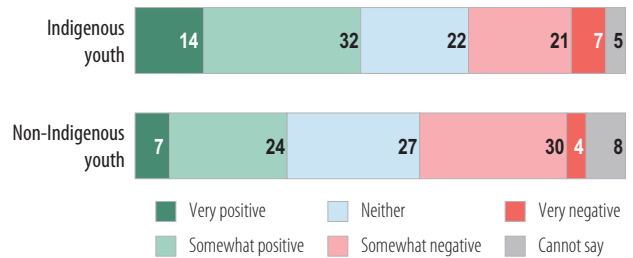
CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS. How does Canada’s youth view the current state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in the country today? Both populations articulate a range of perspectives, but notably it is Indigenous youth who are more positive. More than four in ten Indigenous youth describe the overall relations as very (14%) or somewhat (32%) positive, compared with fewer than three in ten who say it is somewhat (21%) or very (7%) negative (the remainder believe it is neither positive nor negative, or otherwise do not offer an opinion on this question).

By comparison, only three in ten non-Indigenous youth believe relations today are very (7%) or somewhat (24%) positive, with a larger proportion describing it as somewhat (30%) or very (4%) negative (they are also more likely than Indigenous youth to not have a clear opinion either way).

Among Indigenous youth, a positive view of current relations between the two population is most widely expressed by men (55%, versus 38% of women), First Nations youth on reserve (55%), and residents of Quebec (65%) and Atlantic Canada (57%), with this perspective least apt to be shared by among women (38%), youth with a post-secondary degree (39%), and residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (32%). Notably, having close non-Indigenous friends is linked to a more positive view of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations, but so is having less frequent contact with this other population. Among Indigenous youth, in no group does more than one-third describe relations as clearly negative.

Among non-Indigenous youth, opinions on this question are largely similar across the population. A positive view of relations is more evident among men (38%, versus 25% of women), Atlantic Canadians (53%), and those who have

Overall state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples



Q.22
How would you describe the current relations between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada today?

frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples (47%) and close Indigenous friends (42%). Perceptions of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations as clearly negative is most widely articulated in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (44%) and Alberta (42%).

ARE RELATIONS IMPROVING OR DETERIORATING?

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike are more apt to believe that relations between the two populations have improved rather than deteriorated over the past few years, but in both cases many feel things haven’t changed or are unable to say.

Indigenous youth are more than twice as likely to say relations have improved over the past few years (38%) than have deteriorated (16%), with the remainder indicating they are about the same (38%) or cannot say either way (8%). A positive trend is most apt to be mentioned by men, youth 16 or 17 years in age, Quebec residents, and those who have occasional contact with non-Indigenous people. Deteriorating relations is most apt to be the view of those living on reserve, Alberta residents, and those who have no close non-Indigenous friends.

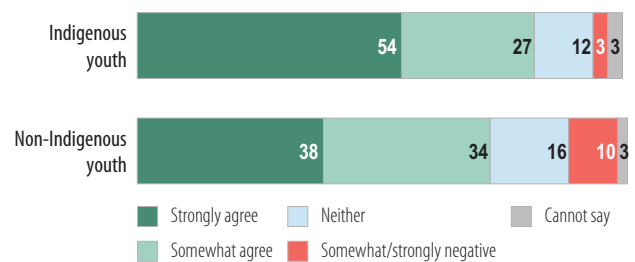
Among non-Indigenous youth, 34 percent believe relations have improved, compared with 11 percent who see the reverse trend, with the plurality (45%) seeing little change either way. A positive trend is most evident among men, those ages 18 to 22, Ontario residents, and those who have frequent contact and close friends in the Indigenous community. It is in Saskatchewan and Manitoba where non-Indigenous youth are most apt to see relations as having deteriorated over the past few years (23%).

DO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HOLD A UNIQUE PLACE IN CANADA? Previous research by the Environics Institute revealed that non-Indigenous Canadians as a whole are divided on the place of Indigenous Peoples in the country; specifically whether they hold a unique place as the land’s first inhabitants or are just one of many distinct communities in a diverse society.¹ This latest survey demonstrates that youth from both populations are much more likely to take the former position, although not equally so.

Among Indigenous youth, eight in ten strongly (54%) or somewhat (27%) agree that *“Indigenous Peoples hold a unique place in this country as the first inhabitants of the land now called Canada”*, compared with just three percent who clearly disagree and another 12 percent who neither agree nor disagree. This is the prevailing view across this population, but strong agreement is most widespread among women, those with a post-secondary degree, and residents of Alberta and Atlantic Canada.

Among non-Indigenous youth, a smaller majority strongly (38%) or somewhat (34%) agree with this statement, compared with 10 percent who disagree, and another 16 percent who neither agree nor disagree. Within this population, strong agreement is most apt to be expressed by youth 18 to 22 and who have a high school diploma [note: these groups likely encompass the highest proportion of youth currently enrolled as students in post-secondary institutions], as well as Ontario residents and those who have frequent contact and close friends in the Indigenous community. Clear disagreement is a minority view across the population, but is more evident among non-Indigenous youth 16 or 17 years of age and/or those without a high school diploma.

Indigenous Peoples hold a unique place in Canada



Q.29d
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Indigenous Peoples hold a unique place in this country as the first inhabitants of the lands now called Canada

¹ Environics Institute for Survey Research. Canadian Public Opinion about Aboriginal Peoples (2016). This survey posed the question differently, offering two options: *“Aboriginal Peoples have unique rights as first inhabitants to the continent”* (52% chose this option), or *“Aboriginal Peoples are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada’s multicultural society”* (41%). Another five percent volunteered that both statements are equally true.

How Indigenous youth feel their Peoples are seen by broader society

Indigenous youth are more likely than not to describe broader society’s view of Indigenous Peoples as negative. At the same time, by more than a two to one margin, they believe such impressions are getting better over time rather than worse.

PERCEIVED IMPRESSIONS OF NON-INDIGENOUS CANADIANS. While Indigenous youth may describe overall relations between the two populations as more positive than negative, they also recognize the negative impressions and stereotypes of their people by broader society in Canada. More than four in ten (43%) believe that non-Indigenous people’s impression of Indigenous Peoples is generally negative, compared with only 23 percent who believe it is positive, with the remainder saying neither or both (26%) or cannot offer an opinion (6%).

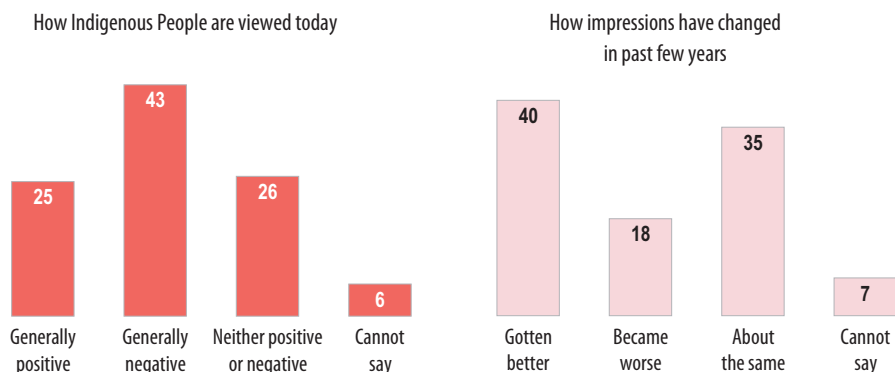
Opinions on this question are divided across the population but belief that society’s view of Indigenous Peoples is generally positive is most evident among men, Inuk youth, and residents of Quebec and Atlantic Canada. This perspective is least apt to be shared by women, Métis, and residents of BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The view that societal impressions are *generally negative* is most widely stated among youth living on reserve, residents of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and those with no close non-Indigenous friends.

HOW IMPRESSIONS ARE CHANGING OVER TIME.

While Indigenous youth are cognizant of the negative impressions held by the non-Indigenous population, many also believe this is less the case than before. Indigenous youth are twice as likely to say that society’s impression of Indigenous Peoples has improved over the past few years (40%) than has become worse (18%). The balance maintain they have remained about the same (35%) or cannot offer an opinion (7%).

A positive trend in societal perspective is most likely to be reported by men, youth ages 18 to 22, residents of central and eastern Canada, and those who have close non-Indigenous friends. This view is least apt to be shared by rural residents, those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and those who have little or no contact with non-Indigenous people.

Society’s impression of Indigenous Peoples Indigenous youth



Q.20/21

[INDIGENOUS] Do you think that Non-Indigenous people’s impression of Indigenous People is generally positive or generally negative? Over the past few years, do you think that non-Indigenous people’s impressions of Indigenous People has gotten better, become worse, or stayed about the same?

Treatment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples

Most Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike believe that Indigenous Peoples experience ongoing discrimination in Canada today. Both populations also see this to be more a function of the prejudice of individual Canadians than something embedded in the country's laws and institutions.

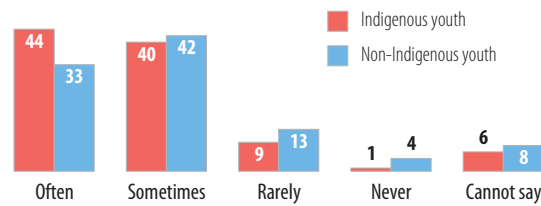
FREQUENCY OF DISCRIMINATION. The survey asked youth about their perceptions of how Indigenous Peoples are treated by broader society in Canada today. More than eight in ten Indigenous Youth say that Indigenous Peoples are often (44%) or sometimes (40%) the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today, with few indicating this happens rarely or never (10%), and another six percent who do not offer an opinion.

Within this population, the view that discrimination happens often is most widespread among women (51%, versus 35% of men), those who live on reserve (54%), and residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (53%). This perspective also increases with age, level of education, and frequency of contact with non-Indigenous people. It is least apt to be shared by Indigenous youth in Quebec (27%).

Most Non-Indigenous youth in Canada also believe that Indigenous Peoples are regularly subject to discrimination today, although not quite to the same extent. Three-quarters say this happens often (33%) or sometimes (44%), compared with rarely (13%) or never (4%), and another eight percent providing no response to the question.

As with Indigenous youth, the view that Indigenous Peoples often experience poor treatment is more evident among women, older youth and those with higher levels of education. This view is also most pronounced in Alberta (40%) and least so in British Columbia (24%). Also of note is the fact that non-Indigenous youth who have been involved in some form of reconciliation activity are twice as likely as others to state that Indigenous Peoples often experience discrimination in Canada today (56%, versus 28%).

Frequency of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples today



Q.24

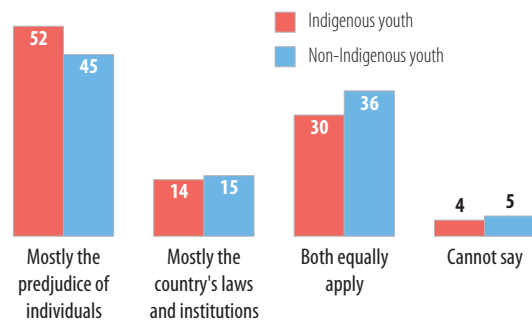
How frequently do you think Indigenous Peoples are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today?

PRIMARY BASIS OF DISCRIMINATION. Discrimination and racism have various roots. It is typically most visible in the actions of other people, but is also manifested systemically through societal institutions and norms. The survey probed on this issue, in terms of the extent to which discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Canada is seen as mostly about individual prejudice versus systemic racism. For both populations, the balance of opinion is clearly weighted toward the former explanation.

Among Indigenous youth, more than half (52%) say such discrimination is based mostly on the prejudice of individuals, compared with only 14 percent who emphasize the country's underlying laws and institutions; another 30 percent say that both are equally at play. Focus on individual prejudice is most common among youth 16 to 17 years of age and those who have not completed high school, while the emphasis placed on the primacy of both prejudice and laws/institutions is most evident among youth with a post-secondary degree and those having frequent contact with non-Indigenous people.

Non-Indigenous youth share a similar perspective on this question, but are a bit less likely to emphasize individual prejudice (45%), and more apt to say that both such prejudice and laws/institutions are equally at the root of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples today (36%). With this population, the focus on individual prejudice is most widespread among youth without a high school diploma and those living in western Canada, while systemic factors are most apt to be mentioned by youth who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities.

Basis of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples



Q.25

When it comes to discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in Canada today, do you think it is based mostly on the country's laws and institutions, or based mostly on the prejudice of individuals?

Indian residential schools

Almost two thirds of non-Indigenous youth across Canada have heard about Indian residential schools, and most in this group believe that this and related government policies continue to play a role in the current challenges facing Indigenous communities today.

AWARENESS OF INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.

Indian residential schools formed a central part of the history and current circumstances of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, as was prominently documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their cross-country meetings and final report (issued in 2015). Almost two-thirds (64%) of non-Indigenous youth across Canada say they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools, or related government policies of the past. This figure reflects a significant growth in awareness over the past several years, based on a 2016 survey of non-Indigenous Canadians which found that 52 percent of Canadians ages 18 to 29 expressed such awareness.²

Awareness of Indian Residential Schools is evident across the non-Indigenous youth population, but most widespread among women, urban residents, those living in western Canada, those reporting frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, and those who have been involved in some type of reconciliation activity. Awareness is lowest among youth 16 to 17 years of age, those without a high school diploma, and residents of Quebec.

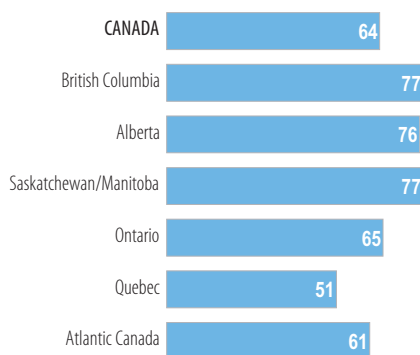
LEGACY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TODAY.

The last of the country's residential schools were closed in the 1990s, but they have left an ongoing legacy in the lives of the remaining survivors and their families. Most non-Indigenous youth in Canada who are aware of Indian residential schools recognize this reality. Among those who indicated an awareness of Indian residential schools, more than eight in ten believe the challenges facing Indigenous communities today are to a great extent (49%) or some extent (33%) a result of government policies such as residential schools. Recognition of this connection has strengthened among non-Indigenous youth 18 to 29 years of age (who are aware of residential schools) since 2016 when only 42 percent indicated the current challenges are the legacy of residential schools to a great extent.

² Ibid

Aware of Indian residential schools

Non-Indigenous youth By region

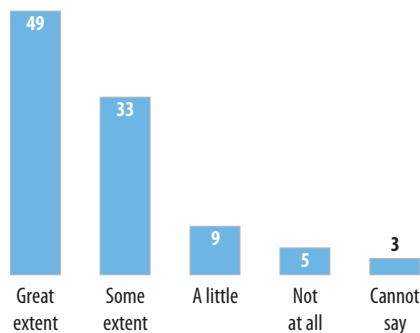


Q.26

[NON-INDIGENOUS] Have you read or heard anything about Indian Residential Schools or other government policies of the past?

Extent of connection between residential schools and current challenges facing Indigenous communities

Non-Indigenous youth – Those aware of residential schools



Q.27

[NON-INDIGENOUS] To what extent do you think that the challenges facing Indigenous communities today are a result of government policies such as residential schools?

Belief that the current challenges facing Indigenous communities are to a great extent the result of residential schools is most likely to be expressed by non-Indigenous women, those who are racialized, and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities, while this view is least evident among youth 16 to 17 years of age and those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Addressing past inequities

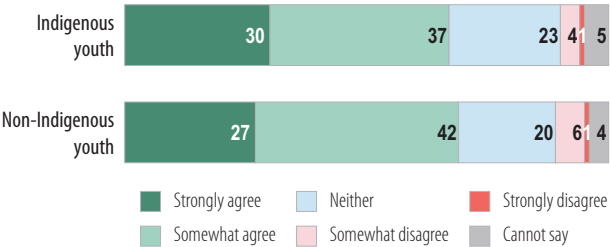
Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth largely agree on the importance of addressing socio-economic inequality, the benefits of Indigenous perspectives on land, community and resources, and the importance of non-Indigenous Canadians learning about the country's colonial legacy.

The survey also probed attitudes about how the past history of colonization and relations between the two populations might be healed. In broad terms, Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth share a notably similar perspective in their responses to the questions posed. This includes several statements which asked survey participants about the extent to which they agree or disagree.

Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples will only improve if social and economic inequalities between the two are reduced. Two-thirds of youth in each population agree with this statement with very few expressing clear disagreement. Indigenous youth are marginally more likely to *strongly agree*, while non-Indigenous youth are more apt to *somewhat agree*, but these differences are minor.

Along with the similarities in viewpoints between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth on this question, there are relatively few notable differences within each population. Among Indigenous youth, strong agreement about the importance of reducing social and economic inequalities is most evident among women and Albertans, but in no group does this proportion drop below one in four nor do more than one in ten say he or she disagrees with the premise. Among non-Indigenous youth, strong agreement is most pronounced among those 18 to 22 years of age, those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, and in particular those who have been involved in reconciliation activities (46%).

Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples will only improve if social and economic inequalities are reduced



Q.29c
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples will only improve if social and economic inequalities between the two are reduced.

Indigenous Peoples expect too much when it comes to acknowledging the past.

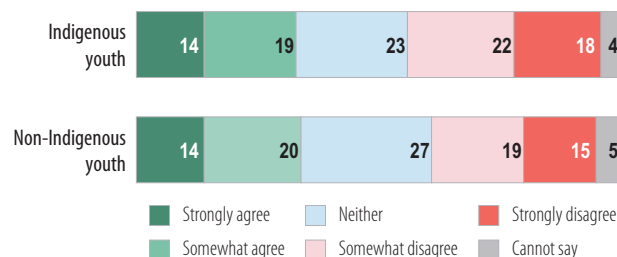
Agreement with this statement is also more aligned between the two populations than might be expected. Among Indigenous youth, one-third strongly (14%) or somewhat (19%) agree with the statement, compared with four in ten who somewhat (22%) or strongly (18%) disagree. Non-Indigenous youth are as likely to agree (34% strongly or somewhat), although less apt to disagree (34% somewhat or strongly) and more likely to have no clear opinion either way.

Among Indigenous youth, those most likely to agree that Indigenous Peoples expect too much in terms of acknowledging the past include men, those ages 16 or 17, and those who have occasional contact with non-Indigenous Peoples. Disagreement is most prominent among women, youth 18 to 22 years of age, and residents of B.C. and Alberta. Among non-Indigenous youth, agreement with the statement is also more pronounced among men and 16-17 year olds, but is also most evident among residents of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as among those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples.

Everyone will benefit from looking more closely at Indigenous perspectives on community, land and culture. On this question there is large majority agreement among youth in both populations. More than eight in ten Indigenous youth strongly (49%) or somewhat (33%) agree with the statement, along with seven in ten non-Indigenous youth (34% and 36%, respectively). Most of the remainder say they neither agree nor disagree, with very few expressing clear disagreement.

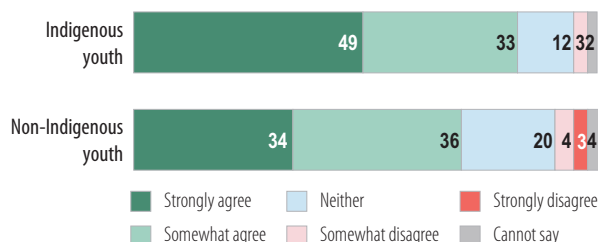
Agreement on the benefit of adopting an Indigenous perspective is evident across both populations. Among Indigenous youth, strong agreement is most pronounced among women, youth living on reserve, those with a post-secondary degree, and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities, while less so among 16-17 year olds. Among non-Indigenous youth, strong agreement is also most widespread among women, as well as Ontario residents, those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, and especially those who have been involved in reconciliation activities (63%).

Indigenous Peoples expect too much when it comes to acknowledging the past



Q.29b
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Indigenous Peoples expect too much when it comes to acknowledging past wrongs

Everyone will benefit from looking more closely at Indigenous perspectives on community, land, and culture



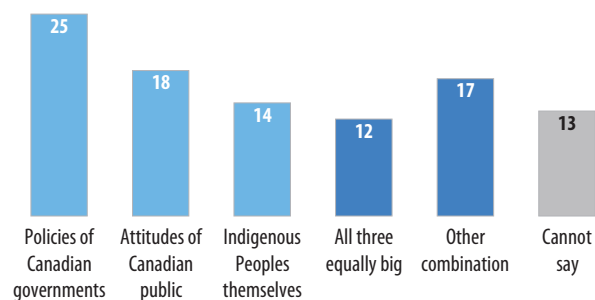
Q.29a
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Everyone will benefit from looking more closely at Indigenous perspectives on community, land and culture

BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY. What do non-Indigenous youth see as the biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples in Canada? The survey presented three choices, and the results reveal little consensus across this population. One in four (25%) says the biggest obstacle to achieving equality is the policies of Canadian governments, compared with 18 percent who name the attitudes of the Canadian public, and 14 percent who believe it is Indigenous Peoples themselves who are standing in the way. Another three in ten insist that more than one of these obstacles are equally significant, either all three (12%), or some other combination (17%). Just over one in ten (13%) cannot offer an opinion on this question.

Taken together, one-third of non-Indigenous youth identify Indigenous Peoples as a major obstacle to their own progress, either alone or in combination with government policies and public attitudes. This proportion for youth ages 18 to 29 is essentially the same as that recorded on a previous survey of non-Indigenous Canadians conducted by the Environics Institute in 2016.³

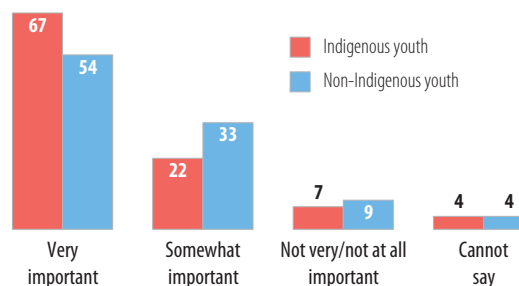
IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS HISTORY. There is broad consensus among youth across the country that all non-Indigenous Canadians should understand the true history of how Indigenous Peoples in Canada have been treated by governments and society. Nine in ten Indigenous youth say this is very (67%) or somewhat (22%) important, along with almost the same proportion of non-Indigenous youth (54% and 33%, respectively). In both groups, strong agreement is most widespread among women, youth with a post-secondary degree, and those who have frequent contact with the other population and who have been involved in reconciliation activities.

Biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples Non-Indigenous youth



Q.28
Which of the following would you say is the biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples in this country?

Importance for all non-Indigenous Canadians to understand the history of Indigenous Peoples



Q.31
In your opinion, how important is it for all non-Indigenous Canadians to understand the true history of how Indigenous Peoples have been treated by governments and society in this country?

³ Ibid

Perspectives on reconciliation

The survey explored awareness and attitudes about reconciliation, including familiarity, perceptions of progress and barriers, and prospects for the future.

Familiarity with reconciliation

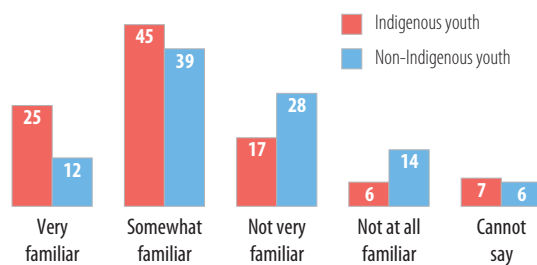
Most Indigenous, and to a lesser extent non-Indigenous, youth are familiar with the concept of reconciliation. The term is most widely understood to revolve around the themes of rebuilding relationships and trust, apology or making amends, and correcting past wrongs.

FAMILIARITY WITH RECONCILIATION CONCEPT.

The concept or idea of reconciliation is now widely recognized (if not fully understood) among a significant proportion of youth across Canada. Among Indigenous youth, seven in ten say they are very (25%) or somewhat (45%) familiar with the concept of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada, with only six percent indicating they are not at all familiar and another seven percent who did not provide a response to the question. Strong familiarity is most common among women, as well as Indigenous youth who have non-Indigenous friends and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities.

Reconciliation is less widely known among non-Indigenous youth. About half say they are very (12%) or somewhat (39%) familiar with the reconciliation concept, compared with four in ten who are not very (28%) or not at all (14%) familiar. In this population, awareness is strongest among youth 18 to 26 years of age, those with a post-secondary degree, residents of western Canada, those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, and those involved with reconciliation activities.

Familiarity with concept of reconciliation



Q.33

How familiar would you say you are with the concept of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada?

WHAT RECONCILIATION MEANS TO YOU. Survey participants who indicated at least some familiarity with reconciliation were asked what the word means to them when they think about relations between Indigenous Peoples and other peoples living in Canada (for this question participants were asked to respond in their own words). For both youth populations, a majority offered one or more responses to the question, and most of these grouped into three themes.

For Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, the most common theme around reconciliation pertains to ideas about **rebuilding a relationship and trust between the two populations** (30% and 34% among Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, respectively). This included use of such terms as getting along, rebuilding trust, respect, restoring relations, bringing people back together, and living in harmony. This theme was most likely to be mentioned by Indigenous participants ages 16 and 17 and Inuk youth.

The second most commonly identified theme is about **apology and making amends** (20% and 25%, respectively). This was described in such language as acknowledging past wrongs and forgiveness. Among Indigenous youth, this theme was most evident among women, those 27 to 29 years of age, and those who have frequent contact with non-Indigenous people. Among non-Indigenous youth, the theme of apology and making amends is also most pronounced among women, youth 27 to 29, as well as those who identify as white, and Albertans.

The third theme focuses on **repair and correcting the past** (mentioned by 14% and 20%, respectively). This included terms such as correcting the past or past wrongs and making things better. This theme is most apt to be mentioned by Indigenous youth who have frequent contact with non-Indigenous people, and by non-Indigenous women.

Beyond these three themes, comparatively few identify other meanings of reconciliation, such as “moving forward” and monetary compensation or repayment for what was suffered in the past. Notably, one in three (36%) Indigenous youth and three in ten (29%) non-Indigenous youth did not offer any response to this question (in most cases these are participants less familiar with the concept of reconciliation).

What does the word “reconciliation” mean to you?

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Rebuilding relationships/trust <i>(Getting along, rebuilding trust, bring together, working together)</i>	30	34
Apology/make amends <i>(Acknowledging past wrongs, forgiveness, apology)</i>	20	25
Repair/correct past wrongs <i>(Correcting the past, making things better)</i>	14	20
Moving forward	5	7
Money/reparations	2	3
Other	8	5
Cannot say	36	29

Q.34

What does the word “reconciliation” mean to you, when you think about relations between Indigenous Peoples and other people living in Canada?

Progress and barriers to reconciliation

Significant proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth say they have seen or heard about examples of progress toward reconciliation, such as apologies and new curriculum. They also identify various barriers to progress such as stereotypes and lack of political leadership.

PROGRESS TOWARD RECONCILIATION. Youth who indicated awareness of the concept of reconciliation were asked if they have seen or are aware of any specific examples of progress toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, either where they live or elsewhere in the country.

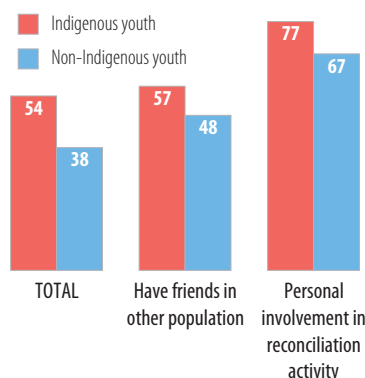
Just over half (54%) of Indigenous youth and 38 percent of non-Indigenous youth familiar with the concept answer in the affirmative. Awareness of such progress toward reconciliation is most widely reported by youth in both populations who are very familiar with the concept of reconciliation, as well as by those who report having been involved in some type of reconciliation activity, and who have friends in the other population. This response is also more evident among women, urban residents and those living in western provinces, as well as among Indigenous youth ages 27 to 29, and those who are Métis.

Participants who say they have seen or are aware of examples of reconciliation progress were then asked to specify what they were referring to (unprompted, without offering response choices). A similar list of themes are provided by Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

The most widely mentioned theme by both populations is one around apologies and acknowledgement for past wrongs, and especially among non-Indigenous youth (32%). Other themes include government actions, education and teaching about Indigenous issues in schools, cultural programs and events, compensation or cash payments, land acknowledgements, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A significant minority of Indigenous (33%) and non-Indigenous (18%) youth could not provide a specific response to the question (mostly those who are not very familiar with the concept).

Have seen specific examples of progress toward reconciliation

Those familiar with reconciliation



Q.35

Have you seen or are aware of specific examples of progress toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, where you live or elsewhere in the country?

Examples of progress toward reconciliation

Those who are aware of specific examples

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Apologies/acknowledgement of past wrongs	17	32
Government actions	10	9
Education/indigenous curriculum	10	7
Cultural programs/events	7	19
Compensation/cash payments	6	12
Land acknowledgements	5	10
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	4	6
Other	15	11
Cannot say	33	18

Q.36

[IF YES TO Q.35] What examples of progress toward reconciliation are you aware of?

BARRIERS TO RECONCILIATION. The survey also asked youth about the extent to which they see each of eight barriers as presenting obstacles to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth generally agree on the significance of these barriers, although Indigenous youth are more apt to consider them as major. Among Indigenous youth, between two-thirds and eight in ten identify each of the eight barriers as a moderate if not major barrier to reconciliation. Among non-Indigenous youth, the range is between just under two-thirds and three-quarters.

The most relevant distinctions are in the proportion identifying barriers as “major” (as opposed to moderate or minor). Indigenous youth are most likely to name **myths and stereotypes about what Indigenous Peoples receive from Canada** (58%) as a major barrier, followed by **lack of political leadership willing to implement real change** (50%). At the bottom of the list as major barriers are **different world views and values**, and **inadequate Indigenous control over education of children and youth** (36% each).

Non-Indigenous youth present a similar rank order of the eight barriers to reconciliation, but in all cases are somewhat less apt to consider them to be major (the gap with Indigenous youth ranges from 1 to 17 percentage points). This population is most likely to consider as major barriers **socio-economic inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples** (43%), followed by **myths and stereotypes about what Indigenous People receive**

(41%), and **lack of political leadership willing to implement change** (39%). As with Indigenous youth, non-Indigenous youth are least apt to emphasize barriers pertaining to **different world views** and **inadequate Indigenous control over the education of children and youth**.

In both populations, youth who do not consider barriers to be “major” are divided more or less equally among those who say they are “moderate” and those who believe they are either “minor” or cannot offer an opinion. The exceptions are in the cases of lack of willingness to accommodate and different worldviews, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth who do not rate these barriers as major are more apt to say they are moderate than minor or cannot say.

Opinions about the barriers to reconciliation are largely similar across each of the youth populations. In most cases women are more likely than men to identify the barriers as major, as are those who have been involved in some type of reconciliation activity. Among Indigenous youth, frequency of contact with non-Indigenous people (including friends) is also linked to identifying barriers as major, while this link is least evident among those living in Quebec.

Among non-Indigenous youth, viewing barriers as major is less evident among those 16 or 17 years of age, those without a high school diploma, and those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (in the cases of lack of political leadership, inadequate control over education, and inadequate control over land and resources) and Alberta (inadequate control over education).

Barriers to achieving reconciliation

	% Who Say Major Barrier	
	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Myths and stereotypes about what Indigenous Peoples receive from Canada (e.g., tax breaks, health services, education funding)	58	41
Lack of political leadership willing to implement real change	50	39
Non-Indigenous people’s lack of knowledge about Indigenous culture and history	46	33
Inadequate Indigenous control over lands and resources	45	30
Socio-economic inequalities	44	43
Lack of willingness among both Peoples to accommodate the needs of the other	42	34
Different worldviews or values	36	27
Inadequate Indigenous control over the education of their children and youth	36	26

Q.37a-h

To what extent do you think each of the following presents a major barrier, a minor barrier, a moderate barrier, or a minor barrier to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People in Canada?

Future prospects for reconciliation

Majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth express optimism about the prospects for meaningful achievement of reconciliation in their lifetimes. Belief in being able to make a difference personally is strongest among those who have already become involved.

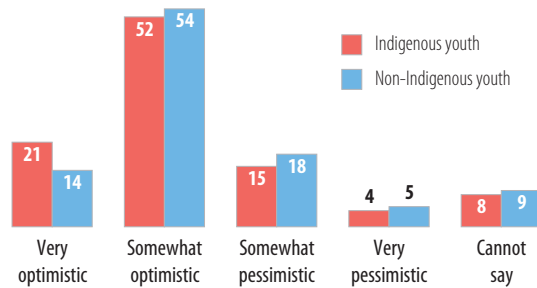
OPTIMISM ABOUT MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION IN ONE'S LIFETIME.

While the country's youth recognize many obstacles to progress toward reconciliation, they are also notably positive about the future. Three-quarters (75%) of Indigenous youth and two-thirds (68%) of non-Indigenous youth say they are somewhat if not very optimistic that there will be meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in their lifetime, compared with roughly one in five who expresses pessimism.

Among Indigenous youth, strong optimism is most widespread among men, those living on reserve, and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities. Pessimism is relatively low across this population but most evident among youth who have no non-Indigenous friends and those with low levels of overall life satisfaction.

Among non-Indigenous youth, strong optimism is most likely to be expressed by men, those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples, and/or who have been involved in reconciliation activities. Overall pessimism is most evident among youth ages 16 and 17, those without a high school diploma, and those with low levels of overall life satisfaction.

Prospects for meaningful reconciliation in your lifetime



Q.38

Thinking about the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic that there will be meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in your lifetime?

PERSONAL AGENCY IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

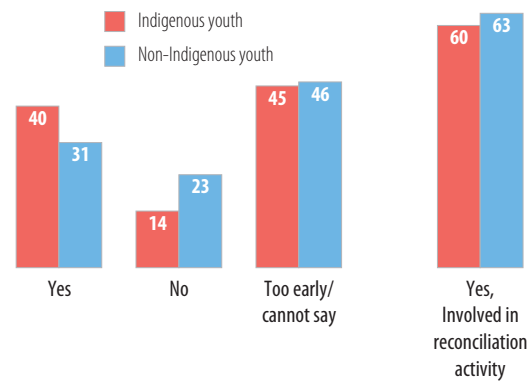
Along with the general sense of optimism, many of the country's youth believe they as individuals can play a role in contributing to the path to reconciliation. Among Indigenous youth, four in ten (40%) say they can make a meaningful difference in helping to achieve reconciliation over their lifetime, compared with 14 percent who believe they cannot do so; the remainder indicate it is too early to say (in their young lives), or cannot offer an opinion (5%). Non-Indigenous youth are somewhat less apt to express such personal agency, with 31 percent affirming their belief in being able to make a difference, versus 23 percent who say no.

In both populations, confidence in being able to make a difference is most pronounced among youth who have already been involved in some form of reconciliation activity (60% and 63%, respectively for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth). And to a lesser extent, personal agency is stronger among youth who are optimistic about the future prospects of reconciliation more generally.

Among Indigenous youth, a positive response to this question is most evident among women, youth ages 16 or 17, those with a post-secondary degree, and BC residents (46%); this view is least apt to be given by Indigenous youth 27 to 29 (this group is also most likely to say it is too early to tell), residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and those who have no non-Indigenous friends.

Among non-Indigenous youth, confidence in personal agency is more evident among urban residents, those who live in B.C., and those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples. In this population, 16 and 17 year olds and Quebecers are least apt to share this view.

Can you make a meaningful difference in helping to achieve reconciliation?



Q.39

Do you believe that you as an individual can make a meaningful difference in helping to achieve reconciliation in Canada over your lifetime?

Personal involvement with reconciliation

The survey asked youth about their own involvement and activities involving reconciliation, including discussions with friends in the other population.

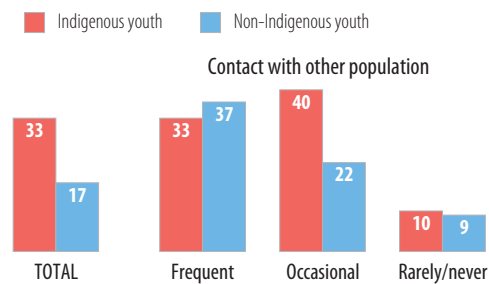
Personal involvement

One-third of Indigenous youth and one in six non-Indigenous youth report having been involved in some type of reconciliation activity, most commonly involving education or cultural events. Among those not already involved, relatively few express strong interest in doing so.

PREVIOUS OR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT. One-third (33%) of Indigenous youth surveyed say they have been personally involved in some form of activity that promotes reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Participation levels do not vary significantly across this population, but is highest among youth 23 to 26 years of age, those with a post-secondary degree, and those with occasional contact with non-Indigenous people, while least evident among those who have no non-Indigenous friends.

Among non-Indigenous youth, just over one in six (17%) reports such involvement in reconciliation activities. This response is most evident among women, residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples. Non-Indigenous youth least apt to become involved with reconciliation activities include those 16 or 17 years of age, those without a high school diploma, and those with little or no contact with Indigenous Peoples.

Personal involvement in activities that promote reconciliation
By frequency of contact with other population



Q.40
Have you personally been involved in any activities that promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples?

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES. Those who report involvement in reconciliation were asked to briefly describe the type of activity (in their own words), and the responses were then categorized by theme. The most common type of reconciliation activities reported by both populations are those involving cultural events, education or classes, training or information sessions, and community events. About three in ten youth in both populations did not provide a specific response to this question, which may indicate that some of these participants did not actually participate in reconciliation activities.

INTEREST IN BECOMING INVOLVED. Those youth who *do not* report having any previous or current involvement in reconciliation activities were asked about their level of interest in doing so. In both populations, there is at best a moderate level of interest in doing so.

Among Indigenous youth, a small majority say they would be definitely (16%) or likely (40%) interested in getting involved in some type of reconciliation activity. Such interest is most apt to be expressed by women and First Nations youth. Among non-Indigenous youth, fewer than half indicate they would be definitely (10%) or likely (35%) interested in getting involved with reconciliation activities.

Those expressing interest in getting involved were asked what type of activity they might like to get involved with given the opportunity. Among those in this group, significant majorities of Indigenous (69%) and non-Indigenous (72%) youth could not offer any specific ideas about what might be of interest, indicating that most who have not yet had any involvement in reconciliation do not have a clear sense of what the opportunities might be.

Among those who do identify areas of interest, the most common ones involve training or information sessions (8% in each population), community events (6% and 3% for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, respectively), cultural activities (5% and 7%), and educational opportunities (5% in each).

Types of reconciliation activities in which you have been involved

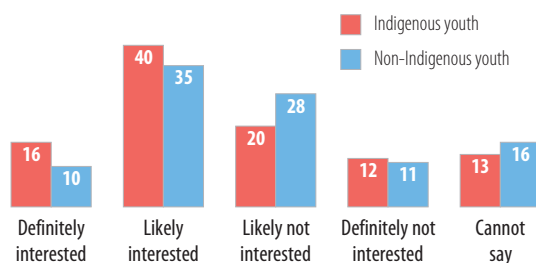
Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Cultural events/activities	23	21
Classes/education/school	19	22
Training information sessions	13	16
Community learning/events	12	9
Activism/protests/marches	7	9
Helping children/families	4	2
Volunteering	3	2
Other activities	12	14
Cannot say	31	29

Q.42

[IF YES TO Q.40] What type of reconciliation activities have you been involved with?

Interest in getting involved in reconciliation activities

Those not already involved



Q.41

[IF NO TO Q.40] How interested are you in getting involved in activities that promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, if there were opportunities to do so?

Learning about reconciliation

Many youth who have friends in the other population report having discussions with them about reconciliation. These discussions are most likely to be described as meaningful, but for some also frustrating, instructive and/or uncomfortable.

DISCUSSIONS WITH FRIENDS. Reconciliation work involves more than participation in organized events, but also in the day-to-day interactions with other people. Among participants who have one or more close friends in the other population, half (51%) of Indigenous youth and almost as many non-Indigenous youth (46%) say they have had at least one discussion with a friend/friends in the other population about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations and/or reconciliation in particular.

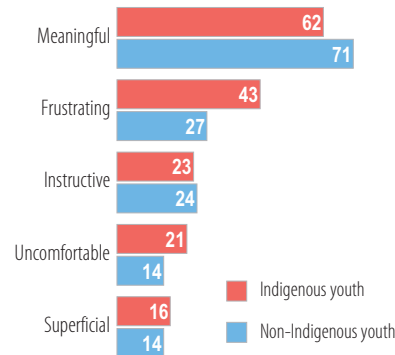
Among Indigenous youth, such discussions are most commonly reported by women, residents of Alberta, and those who have been involved in reconciliation activities [Note: the non-Indigenous subsample who have a close Indigenous friend is too small to report on group differences].

Those who say they had such conversations with friends from the other population were asked to indicate which of five adjectives best describes their feelings about the interaction (participants could select as many as appropriate). Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike were most likely to describe their discussions about reconciliation in terms of being **meaningful** (62% and 71%, respectively).

Other terms were less apt to be used, with Indigenous youth more apt to say **frustrating** (43%, versus 27% of non-Indigenous youth), and **uncomfortable** (21%, versus 14%). Responses between the two populations were similar in the proportion describing these discussions as either **instructive** (23% and 24%, respectively) or **superficial** (16% and 14%, respectively).

Some differences are apparent among Indigenous youth, with women being less likely to describe their discussions with non-Indigenous friends in positive terms (more mentions of them being frustrating and uncomfortable, although less so in being superficial). First Nations youth were more positive than Métis, in terms of the experience being instructive and not frustrating or uncomfortable. [The subsample of non-Indigenous youth is too small to provide for an analysis of group differences].

Words that best describe discussions about reconciliation



Q.43/44

Have you ever had a discussion with [Indigenous/non-Indigenous] friends about Indigenous-Non-Indigenous relations or reconciliation? [IF YES] Which of the following words best describes your feelings about these discussions about reconciliation?

WHAT NON-INDIGENOUS CANADIANS SHOULD KNOW. Survey participants were asked an open-ended about what they felt was most important in terms of educating non-Indigenous Canadians about Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Indigenous youth were asked (unprompted) what one thing they wish non-Indigenous Canadians understood about Indigenous Peoples.⁴ The most common themes to emerge are a desire for non-Indigenous Canadians to understand that Indigenous Peoples are equals and not so different from themselves (27%), and to be more informed about their history and culture (23%) and/or the mistreatment and trauma resulting from colonization and racism (13%). Four in ten did not offer a response to this question. Themes are largely the same across this population, with women more likely to emphasize history/culture, mistreatment/trauma, and government actions, while men are less apt to offer any response.

Non-Indigenous youth were asked a different question: Is there one thing they most would like to know about Indigenous Peoples? The results suggest that few non-Indigenous youth have ever considered this question. Fewer than four in ten provided any response, with the most common themes being a desire to learn more about the history, culture and traditions of Indigenous Peoples (10%) and how they live (8%). Responses are generally similar across this population. Non-Indigenous youth are more likely to provide a response to the question if they have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples and have been involved with reconciliation activities.

What would you most like the non-Indigenous Canadians to understand Indigenous youth

	%
We are equal/not so different	27
Our history/culture	23
Mistreatment/trauma	13
Government policies/residential schools	7
Other	7
Cannot say	39

Q.32a
 [INDIGENOUS] Is there one thing you wish non-Indigenous Canadians understood about Indigenous Peoples?

What would you most like to know about Indigenous Peoples? Non-Indigenous youth

	%
History/culture/tradition	10
How they live/conditions	8
How I can help	4
What the future holds for them	4
Residential schools/past mistreatment	3
What they want	3
Government policies	3
Other	7
Cannot say	63

Q.32b
 [NON-INDIGENOUS] Is there one thing you would most like to know about Indigenous Peoples?

⁴ This question was inspired by a similar question included on a survey of Black persons living in the Greater Toronto Area (see www.theblackexperienceproject.ca)

Life goals and aspirations

In addition to the focus on relations and reconciliation, the survey also explored themes around life goals and aspirations among youth in Canada that provides a broader context about the lives of this generation, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Life aspirations

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Canada share the same broad lifetime goals, which include a successful or meaningful career, family and children, financial independence, and living a balanced life. Indigenous and ethnic-related connections are comparatively less prominent.

TOP LIFETIME GOALS. Early in the survey, participants were asked to identify what three things they most want to achieve in their lifetime (unprompted, without offering response options). Youth provided a wide range of responses, but most group into a handful of themes, and are essentially the same among Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

For both populations, the most frequently mentioned life aspirations pertain to career (e.g., having a successful career, a good job, or identification of a specific type of work or profession) and family (having children, marriage, a happy marriage). Other commonly identified themes include acquiring property (a home, a car, land), education, financial security (wealth, financial freedom, being debt-free), travel, and happiness.

Life aspirations are notably similar across the two populations, although Indigenous youth are more apt to emphasize education and property, while non-Indigenous youth are more likely to say they aspire to wealth and travel. In both populations, women are more apt to place a priority on having children, while men focus more on wealth.

Among Indigenous youth, women are also more focused on having a home and travel; among non-Indigenous youth, women are more apt to say they aspire to a successful career. Generally speaking, the youngest age cohort (ages 16-17) emphasizes career goals, while the oldest (27-29) focuses on financial security and (for Indigenous youth) property.

Top three lifetime goals

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Career/job/occupation <i>(career, specific job, profession)</i>	45	51
Family <i>(children, marriage)</i>	41	46
Property/possessions <i>(home, car, land)</i>	32	23
Education	30	15
Financial security <i>(wealth, freedom, debt-free)</i>	23	32
Travel	13	24
Good health	12	9
Happiness	9	14
Success/fame	6	6
Helping others	4	3
Friends/relationships	4	5
Other goals	22	27
None/cannot say	14	10

Q2

Thinking long term, what are the three things you most want to achieve in your lifetime?

DEFINING A GOOD LIFE. The survey also asked youth about how they define a “good life” in terms of the importance placed on each of eight types of life goals. Four aspects were considered by a clear majority in both populations to be very important to having a good life (as opposed to being “somewhat” or “not so” important): **financial independence, raising healthy/well-adjusted children, having a good job/successful career, and living a balanced life.** In each case, three-quarters (74%) of Indigenous youth rate the aspect as very important, while non-Indigenous youth are somewhat less apt to place this priority on healthy children (62%) and a successful career (59%)

Responses to this set of good life characteristics do not vary much within each population, especially among Indigenous youth. Among non-Indigenous youth, having a balanced life and financial independence are more evident among youth ages 23 to 29, urban residents, and those with a post-secondary degree. Women are more likely to place strong importance on a balanced life and having healthy, well-adjusted children, while men are marginally more apt to prioritize a successful career.

Indigenous youth were also asked to rate three other characteristics of a good life, which were less apt to be considered as very important: **being connected to one’s home community or homeland (50%), having access to traditional ceremonial practices (35%) and being able to speak one’s ancestral language fluently (33%);** in the latter two cases the balance of opinion is roughly divided between those who say they are “somewhat important” or “not very important.” The priority placed on these aspects of a good life is most evident among First Nations youth (especially among those on reserve) and those with a post-secondary degree. Strong importance on ancestral language fluency and access to traditional ceremonies is also most evident among Indigenous youth ages 16 and 17, with the former emphasized among those living in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec, and the latter among Albertans.

Non-indigenous youth were asked about the importance of **having a strong connection to their ancestry or ethnic heritage.** Only one in five (19%) says this is very important to defining a good life for him or her, with the balance split between those who say it is somewhat (41%) or not so (38%)

Very important to defining a good life

	% Who Say Very Important	
	Indigenous Youth	Non-Indigenous Youth
Financial independence	74	73
Raising healthy/well-adapted children	74	62
Having a good job/successful career	74	59
Living a balanced life	74	74
Being connected to community/homeland	50	NA
Having access to traditional ceremonial practices	35	NA
Being able to speak ancestral language fluently	33	NA
Having a strong connection to ancestry/ethnic heritage	NA	19

Q.7a-h

People define “the good life” in many different ways. Please tell me if the following are very important, somewhat important, or not so important to your idea of a good life.

important. This priority is only somewhat higher among racialized youth (29%) and also among those who have frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples (30%) and/or have been involved in reconciliation activities (35%).

Basis of confidence and barriers to achievement

Most Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth feel confident about achieving at least some of their life goals, based on their personal drive and support from others. The biggest obstacles are seen to be financial, but also emotional in terms of stress, fear, depression and lack of motivation.

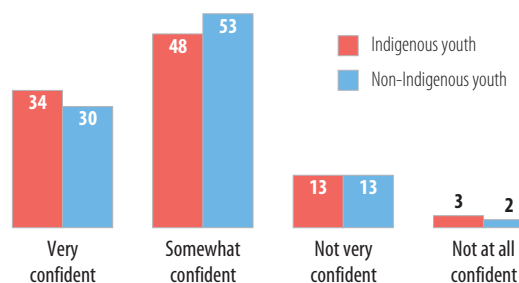
CONFIDENCE IN ACHIEVING LIFE GOALS. Most youth in Canada feel reasonably if not strongly confident about achieving at least some of what they hope to accomplish in their lifetime. Among Indigenous youth, one-third (34%) say they feel very confident about this, with most of the remainder saying they are somewhat confident (53%), compared with few that say they are not very (13%) or not at all (3%) confident. Non-Indigenous youth express a similar perspective.

Confidence levels are generally similar across the two populations. Among Indigenous youth, strong confidence is more evident among men, youth 16 or 17 years of age, and those who live on reserve. No more than one in five indicates he or she has little or no confidence in achieving at least some life goals, but this is most evident among those who have not completed high school and residents in the Prairie Provinces. Among non-Indigenous youth, strong confidence is more apt to be expressed by those living in urban areas. In both populations, confidence in achieving life goals is linked to both overall life satisfaction, as well as frequency of contact with the other population and involvement with reconciliation activities.

BASIS OF CONFIDENCE. What gives youth hope and confidence in being able to achieve their goals in life? This question was posed without prompting, and revealed several key themes. Most commonly identified are one's personal drive (e.g., determination, hard work, belief in oneself) and support from others (family, friends, co-workers). Less likely to be mentioned are one's education, success to date, knowledge and skills, and other reasons. A significant proportion in both populations were unable to identify anything specific in response to this question.

Indigenous youth are more likely to ground their confidence in support from others, while non-Indigenous are more apt to mention their personal drive. Among Indigenous youth, women and Métis are notably more likely to identify both

Confidence in achieving at least some life goals



Q.3

How confident are you feeling today about achieving at least some of what you hope to achieve in your lifetime?

Basis of confidence in achieving goals

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Personal desire <i>(determination, hard work, belief in self)</i>	27	37
Support from others <i>(family, friends, co-workers)</i>	27	19
Education	7	7
Success to date/good job	6	8
Knowledge/skills	3	4
Other reasons	11	14
None/cannot say	36	30

Q.4

What gives you hope and confidence in being able to achieve these goals?

personal drive and support from others, while men and First Nations youth were less apt to offer any response to the question. Among non-Indigenous youth, the same pattern emerges for women and men. In both populations, education appears to play only a minimal role in how youth identify the basis of their confidence in achieving their life goals.

BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING LIFE GOALS. The survey also asked (unprompted) about the biggest challenges facing youth in achieving their life goals. The most common theme pertains to finances and money (e.g., lack of resources, debt, low wages being poor), identified by close to half in each population. One in four identified emotional challenges, described by such terms as stress, anxiety, fear, depression, lack of motivation, and lack of confidence. Other barriers include completing one's education, the lack of job opportunities, family and health issues, and simply a lack of time to do what is desired. Relatively few Indigenous youth mention barriers related to discrimination or specifically being Indigenous.

Among Indigenous youth, obstacles related to finances and money are most widely identified by women, and B.C. residents, while emotional challenges tend to be emphasized by women, youth 18 to 26 years of age, urban residents, and those who have a high school diploma (but no post-secondary degree). Non-Indigenous women are also more likely than men to identify financial barriers to achieving life goals. In both populations, emotional challenges are least evident among youth 16 to 17 years of age.

TEACHERS AND MENTORS. Who do youth consider to be their teachers or guides, individuals who have been helpful in their lives to date? For Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth alike, parents and other family members stand out as playing the most significant role in supporting their life aspirations, mentioned by two-thirds of those surveyed. Less commonly identified are teachers/instructors and friends. One in four does not identify anyone who has served as a teacher or guide in his or her life to date.

Women are more likely than men to identify family members as teachers or guides (and especially both parents and grandparents), while men are less apt to mention anyone who has played this type of role in his or her life. Indigenous women are also more apt to mention teachers/instructors and friends.

Biggest challenges to achieving life goals

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Finances <i>(lack of money, debt, low wages)</i>	46	47
Emotions <i>(stress, fear, anxiety, depression, lack of motivation)</i>	25	25
Education <i>(finishing, poor grades)</i>	12	12
Lack of job opportunities	12	20
Family issues	9	10
Health issues	9	9
Lack of time	8	9
Society/other people	6	8
Who I am/discrimination/racism	5	2
Lack of knowledge/experience	5	3
Being Indigenous/aboriginal	2	NA
The economy	2	8

Q.5

And what do you see as the biggest challenges facing you in achieving these goals?

Teachers and guides in your life

Main Themes	Indigenous youth	Non-Indigenous youth
Family member (NET)	64	66
<i>Mother</i>	26	16
<i>Father</i>	15	10
<i>Both parents</i>	25	39
<i>Grandparents</i>	13	8
<i>Siblings</i>	9	7
<i>Other</i>	19	14
Teacher/instructor	24	21
Friends/peers	19	24
Elders/adults	3	1
Work managers/boss	3	4
God/Jesus/spiritual leaders	4	4
Me/myself	2	5
Other	23	25
None/cannot say	26	24

Q.6

Who do you consider to be your teachers or guides in life?

Identity and heritage

Most Indigenous youth express strong pride in both their Indigenous and Canadian identities. By comparison, non-Indigenous youth are less apt to feel this way about their ethnic/cultural heritage or Canadian identities.

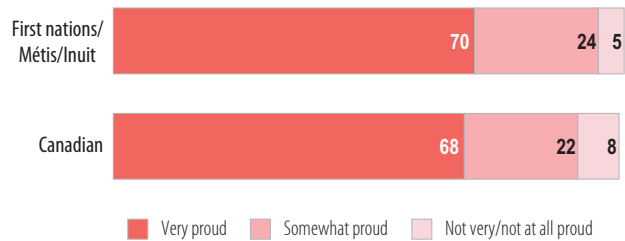
PRIDE IN IDENTITY. The survey also measured the strength of pride that youth have in their identities as Indigenous or ethnic/cultural background, and as Canadians. Among Indigenous youth, seven in ten (70%) say they are very proud to be First Nations, Metis or Inuit, with almost as many (68%) expressing the same level of pride in being Canadian. Fewer than one in ten has little or no pride in either part of his or her identity.

Strong pride in Indigenous identity is evident across the youth population, but most widespread among women, First Nations and Inuk youth, and residents of Alberta and Quebec. Strong pride in being Canadian is most widely expressed by youth without a high school diploma and Albertans, and least so among youth living on reserve and those living in Quebec.

Non-Indigenous youth are less apt to express pride, both in their ethnic or cultural heritage (39%) and in being Canadian (52%), although few have little or no pride. Strong pride in ethnic/cultural background is somewhat more evident among racialized youth (55%, versus 33% of white youth). Strong pride in being Canadian is comparable across the population, but lower among rural residents and those living in Quebec. In both cases, strength of pride is positively associated with frequent contact with Indigenous Peoples.

Pride in identity

Indigenous youth

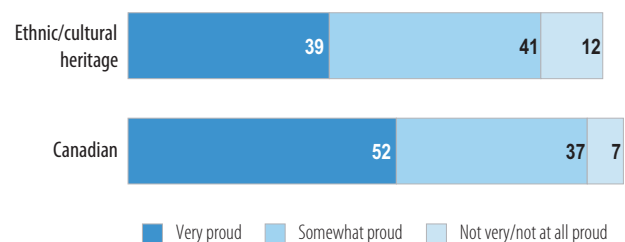


Q.8a-b

[INDIGENOUS] How proud are you to be [First Nations/Metis/Inuit]? / A Canadian?

Pride in identity

Non-Indigenous youth



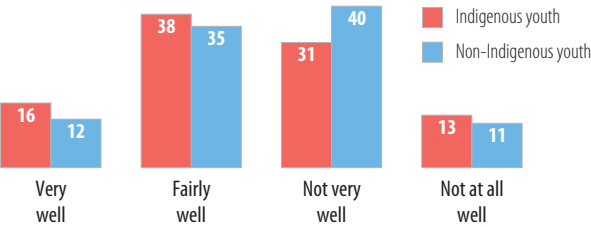
Q.9a-b

[NON-INDIGENOUS] How proud are you: Of your ethnic or cultural heritage / To be a Canadian?

KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILY TREE. How well do youth in Canada know their family tree or who their ancestors are? Few in either population claim to be very knowledgeable, but most appear to have some understanding and this is somewhat more likely to be the case among Indigenous youth. More than half of Indigenous youth say they know their ancestors very (16%) or somewhat (38%) well, compared with a smaller proportion among non-Indigenous youth (12% and 35%, respectively).

Responses to this question do not vary much across either population. Knowledge of one’s family tree is closely linked to both overall life satisfaction and confidence in achieving one’s life goals, which suggests that such knowledge may in some way contribute to positive well-being and success in life (or that both may be linked to other factors not covered in this survey).

Knowledge of family tree/ancestors Indigenous youth



Q.10
How well do you feel you know your family tree? That is, who your ancestors are?

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