



# Reconciliation Toolkit for Business Leaders

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Reconciliation Toolkit for Business Leaders



Over the last few years, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) has heard from business leaders across the country, telling us they want to help advance reconciliation, but don't know what to do. This toolkit was created as a response to this need for support and guidance. It is a resource for small- and medium-sized businesses to help people like you develop practical, actionable plans to advance reconciliation in your business thinking, planning and practices.

We want to support you on the journey toward reconciliation. This toolkit can help show you the way to embrace important change. Your leadership—taking the first steps and shining a light on the path forward—will also inspire and embolden other business leaders and organizations, and society, to join this important undertaking.

We know that companies are at different points along the reconciliation continuum. How your business chooses to explore these areas, and commit to and pursue reconciliation, will depend on your current level of knowledge, understanding and capacity to implement new policies and practices. That's why we've designed the toolkit to be flexible, and to meet you where you are now in your knowledge and efforts. It is a resource to support progress toward reconciliation, providing educational materials, templates and tips for planning, resource directories and organizations you can turn to for additional support.

The toolkit is structured around four specific areas of reconciliation:

- ▶ Reflection and Learning
- ▶ Leading Transformation
- ▶ Inclusive Workplaces
- ▶ Outreach and Engagement

Collaboration is a key theme that runs through the toolkit. Only when people come together with a shared spirit of openness, reflection, honesty and accountability can we all begin to make progress toward reconciliation. We encourage you to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples to develop your reconciliation action plans. Collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples builds the trust, strong ties and shared benefits that mark a new way forward toward reconciliation.

The toolkit also encourages you to approach reconciliation with a commitment to “two-eyed seeing”. This means bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous views together, in balance with each other. We ask you to look through both lenses to see and draw on the strengths of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge, approaches and practices—to the benefit of all.

Reconciliation is a journey of reflection and action. Because of this, we want to acknowledge your openness and willingness to take on this challenging role to help lead the process toward reconciliation. Your role in the process requires you to consider and confront complex and difficult subjects. It means asking yourself and others to listen, reflect and challenge personal assumptions about Indigenous peoples. Only through this kind of meaningful reflection can we begin to overcome the biases that put barriers in the way of progress. When people are moving forward together, with mutual respect and understanding, reconciliation and a shared future become possible.

We are excited to be on this journey with you.

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## ABOUT CAP

Founded in 1971, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is a national aboriginal organization that represents Aboriginal peoples who live off reserve, in either urban or rural areas across Canada. Our mandate is: To improve the socio-economic conditions of off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis and Southern Inuit living in urban and rural areas.

CAP is one of five National Indigenous Organizations recognized by the Government of Canada. We work collectively with 10 provincial and territorial organizations across this country to promote and advance the common interests, collective and individual rights, and needs of our constituents. We work to ensure that all Canadians are included in the shared effort of reconciliation. Part of this work is supporting the private sector and business community in advancing reconciliation.

## OUR APPRECIATION

We express our deep appreciation to the organizations and individuals who participated in the development of this toolkit. We are grateful for the knowledge, expertise, time and resources they each brought to the project.

Special thanks to our National Advisory Board of Indigenous business leaders, non-Indigenous business leaders and Indigenous reconciliation consultants—who specialize in advising private organizations across the country—for their input and ideas, and for engaging their extensive networks in this process.

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The toolkit is also informed by, and reflects ideas and insights from, these invaluable tools and resources:

- ▶ *Calls to Action*, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)
- ▶ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007)
- ▶ International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 (1989)
- ▶ *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* (1998), Royal Commission of Canada
- ▶ *Culturally Relevant Gender Based Models of Reconciliation* (2010), Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)
- ▶ Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE)
- ▶ Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Progressive Aboriginal Relations Program
- ▶ *Coming Together, Making Progress: Business's Role in Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* (2017), Canadian Chamber of Commerce

## TOWARD A NEW VISION

**“Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed.”**

– Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

### Understanding the past

To create a new vision for the future, we must first understand the past. Foundational to this history is the concept of colonization: that Canada’s public policies have consciously and deliberately compromised the culture, traditions, and way of life of Indigenous peoples. For decades, much of this history was hidden. Through the persistent efforts of numerous individuals, groups and organizations, this history continues to be revealed. Some people believe that colonization ended with the closing of the last Indian Residential Schools in the late 1990s and the Government of Canada’s formal apology in 2008. But the legacy of colonization persists today.

When people understand Canada’s shameful history of colonization and its devastating impact, they can start repairing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and building new ones. That’s why CAP is sharing this information with you. Our purpose isn’t to spark feelings of guilt or shame. It is to help you know the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the widespread, institutionalized discrimination and racism they face—so you can better understand the importance of making the journey to reconciliation, and your role in it.

Education is a necessary step in breaking down the negative attitudes toward Indigenous peoples that perpetuate racism and discrimination. Because negative attitudes are often rooted in lack of knowledge and understanding, these attitudes need to be broken down before respectful relationships can develop in the workplace and in broader society. Greater knowledge and understanding will lead to recognition, respect and, ultimately, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

### The lasting impacts of colonization

The lasting impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples are clear: A history of racism and discrimination contributed to poverty and poor outcomes for Indigenous peoples, which in turn have continued the cycle of economic exclusion. Knowing more about the lasting impacts will help you understand the challenges facing Indigenous peoples today, and why a vision for a new future is so important.

**Lasting impacts on families:** Between the late 1880s and 1996, an estimated 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and sent away to Indian Residential Schools.<sup>i</sup> For the vast majority of these children, their experience at the schools was emotionally and physically damaging. Separated from their parents, extended family, language and culture, many who returned home struggled to reintegrate with family and community. Just imagine being six years old<sup>ii</sup> and being cut off from the love of your parents and family. Survivors grew up without role models for healthy relationships, parenting and family life. The impact of the lack of loving attachments was profound.

## A History of Colonization in Canada:

Evidence of settlement on BC coast. <sup>1</sup>

14,000 years ago  
Indigenous settlement

Fear among Indigenous peoples about loss of self-governance grows into political action to defend against colonial takeover.

1451  
Iroquois Confederacy

The largest political entity facing Europe settlement of the Americas. Formed in the mid-16th century although some scholars date its formation to as early as 1142 CE.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

As a direct result of residential schools, Indigenous peoples are proportionally more affected by poverty, homelessness and poor health, and over-represented in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. Successive generations of Indigenous children have been targeted by the child welfare system, removed from their homes and put into state care.<sup>iii</sup> Today, more than half of children in care are Indigenous.<sup>ii</sup> The impact of residential schools has been multi-generational, damaging not just the survivors, but also their children and communities emptied of children.

**Lasting impacts of economic exclusion:** Until 1880, Indigenous peoples were able to sell their services and whatever they caught, grew, harvested or manufactured to whoever would buy. The 1880 *Amendment to the Indian Act* brought in a requirement for Indigenous peoples to have permits or licenses to sell their goods and services, and to buy their food, clothing and other necessities of life. Commercial licenses for fishing and other business were then largely given to non-Indigenous operators.<sup>iv</sup> Non-Indigenous people faced fines and imprisonment for buying from unlicensed Indigenous individuals or businesses.<sup>vvi</sup>

Restricted in their ability to work, run a business or buy goods without a permit, most Indigenous peoples were effectively excluded from participating in the Canadian economy. The impact of this exclusion continues today, in the form of treaty and land rights that negatively impact the social, physical and economic health of Indigenous peoples.

**Lasting impacts of racism and discrimination:** Common misconceptions and misinformation continue to feed the racist attitudes and discrimination that exist in Canada today. More people than you might think believe that all Indigenous peoples get a “free ride” from the taxpayer, are lazy, alcoholic or drug-addicted and the cause of their own health and social problems. They wonder why Indigenous peoples can’t “just get over” the past, and get their lives, families and communities on track. These kinds of ideas show a lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding of the history and impact of colonization.<sup>iii</sup>

Indigenous peoples are doctors, musicians, teachers, elected officials, cabinet ministers, writers, business owners, professional athletes, artists, community leaders, social workers, harvesters, spiritual leaders, healthcare workers, academics, chefs...the list goes on. They are children, students, parents, volunteers, grandparents, university graduates, skilled workers, award winners and neighbours. In other words, human beings with the desire, ability and the right to fully participate in all aspects of society and the economy. Yet many face discrimination and racist attitudes when applying for jobs, in the workplace, receiving social services, at school and on the street.

#### “Why can’t they just get over it?”

“My answer has always been: Why can’t you always remember this? This is about memorializing those people who have been the victims of a great wrong. Why don’t you tell the United States to ‘get over’ 9/11? Why don’t you tell this country to ‘get over’ all the veterans who died in the Second World War, instead of honouring them once a year?”

– Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “The Current” (CBC), April 4, 2017.

European explorers, traders and businesses claim Indigenous lands, disregarding original inhabitants. Not all settlers treat Indigenous peoples well, but balance of power between settlers and Indigenous peoples is generally maintained through mutually beneficial trade.

1497  
Cabot

Discovers and claims land in North America for England, ignoring signs that it was already inhabited.<sup>5</sup>

1534  
Cartier

Claims land in North America for France. Tensions between Indigenous peoples and Europeans rise when two Iroquoian youth (possibly sons of the leader) are kidnapped by European traders to be taken to Europe. The leader agrees that they can go under the condition that they return with European goods to trade.<sup>6</sup>

## A NEW ERA FOR RECONCILIATION

Now is the moment to begin rebuilding positive, productive, respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. While there is still much work to do and progress to be made, the past decade has seen a significant increase in the attention paid to reconciliation by governments, businesses, educators, cultural institutions and media. Two seminal reports from this period underscore the urgency of improving relations and advancing toward reconciliation. Both reports provide invaluable information and direction to help you adopt a commitment to reconciliation, and play a leadership role:

- ▶ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007. UNDRIP enshrines and protects individual and collective rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world”. These rights include: enjoyment and practice of Indigenous cultures, customs, religions and languages; development and strengthening of Indigenous economies, social and political institutions; and Indigenous peoples’ right to be free from discrimination.
- ▶ In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) issued its *Calls to Action* report, after hearing testimony from more than 6,500 witnesses to residential school experiences and impacts. The report includes 94 “calls to action” to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.” These actions fall under a range of issues and categories, and are directed to different organizations, institutions and sectors. Read the full report here: [www.nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

The TRC report includes a call to action (number 92) specifically for the corporate sector, to adopt UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation and apply its principles, norms and standards to corporate policies and operations. They include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ **Engagement:** Committing to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- ▶ **Education:** Providing education for management and staff on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the UNDRIP, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism.
- ▶ **Equity:** Ensure that Indigenous peoples have equitable access to jobs, training and education opportunities in your business and sector, and that Indigenous communities both on- and off-reserve gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

While reconciliation is not the sole responsibility of the corporate sector, businesses play an important role in leading and supporting the way forward. Businesses are in and of themselves communities: Their leaders work continually to nurture and improve respectful relationships and productive collaboration, in and outside their organizations.

That’s why we’re asking you and other small- and medium-size business leaders to help advance reconciliation, starting with your own business. Your commitment and leadership can help break the cycle of racism, discrimination and exclusion that so many Indigenous peoples face, and demonstrate that change is possible.

## GETTING STARTED

How you choose to make the journey toward reconciliation is up to you. It will depend on your readiness, capacity and capabilities, as well as those of your business. We're here to help you get started, and to guide and support you along the way. This toolkit identifies four areas for engaging and taking action:

- ▶ Reflection and Learning
- ▶ Leading Transformation
- ▶ Inclusive Workplaces
- ▶ Outreach and Engagement

For each of the four action areas, you'll see that we begin with a section called "Reflection", which provides context and guidance for the suggested actions that follow. In this first area, "Reflection and Learning", the focus is the process of reflection—identifying and examining personal beliefs, biases and attitudes toward Indigenous peoples. This process is fundamental to your ability to learn, understand and engage in the reconciliation process in a meaningful and effective way. And, to help combat the underlying assumptions and attitudes that can drive racism and discrimination—whether intended or unintended—in your business and sector.

For each area, we also provide information, suggestions, how-to's and recommended actions. We've identified opportunities for engagement and collaboration with Indigenous peoples, and suggestions for getting the process started. Throughout, you'll find recommended resources and reading.

It's important to recognize that the reconciliation journey is a personal one. You'll start by examining your own motivations, attitudes and beliefs. Remember that progress requires listening to, learning from and collaborating with Indigenous peoples along the way. When Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples meet, they can walk on the same path. When they relate to each other, they take giant steps forward. The more people take steps together, the closer we'll come to achieving the vision of reconciliation.

**As more settlers arrive, incidences and experiences of exclusion and subjugation increase, through claims of land ownership, policies related to trade, and economic development practices.**

### 1629-1701

#### Beaver Wars

Indigenous peoples were the primary agents in the commercial fur trade with Europeans, through hunting, transporting and trading their catch. As the importance of trade increased, competition and rivalry among Indigenous communities grew, resulting in internecine battles for share of the trade market and resulting income.<sup>7,8</sup>

### 1670

#### Hudson's Bay Company

Hudson Bay watershed lands are granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, along with the right to govern and operate business in the territory however it wants, without restriction.

Fur trading has negative impact on Indigenous peoples, creating reliance on European trade and goods. The balance of power shifts as fur traders realize that Indigenous communities involved in the fur trade are no longer self-sufficient.<sup>9</sup>

# #1 REFLECTION AND LEARNING

## REFLECTION

An important starting point for business leaders is a better understanding of and appreciation for the history, heritage and hardships that Indigenous peoples faced at the hands of Canada's leaders. As part of this learning process, individuals must reflect on their own biases because everyone has them. For example, you can be biased toward something, like a type of food or brand of running shoe. But when people act out of negative, discriminatory biases and attitudes toward other people they damage lives, sometimes irreparably.

To play a role in advancing reconciliation, each of us must acknowledge and understand our own biases—what they are and where they come from—toward Indigenous peoples. Sometimes we're not even aware that we have these attitudes, or don't believe that they're racist—for example, using a derogatory term ("Indian", "Eskimo", "Pocahontas"), telling an "Indian" joke, or spreading ideas and information that simply aren't true (Indigenous peoples get free housing, don't pay taxes, don't try to improve their own lives, and so on).

That's why this toolkit asks you to begin your journey by exploring your own biases, both conscious or unconscious. This means looking inward and undertaking a process of personal reflection. How can you know you have a bias if it's hidden? By asking questions such as:

- ▶ Have I ever stopped to really consider what I think about Indigenous peoples?
- ▶ Who has influenced my thinking about Indigenous peoples, and how?
- ▶ What experiences—negative or positive—might have affected my ideas or attitudes?

Once you have identified your personal assumptions and beliefs, you can learn and work on changing how they affect your business decisions and actions. Armed with this learning, you can productively identify opportunities for broader organizational education. Education paired with intentional and personal reflection can help guide you and your employees in making the connection to meaningful action as it relates to reconciliation.

1763

Royal Proclamation

**Royal Proclamation claiming British territory in North America sets out guidelines for European settlement of Aboriginal territories, in an attempt to build and maintain loyalty from Indigenous peoples who support England.**

Has huge historical significance for Indigenous peoples as it is early and powerful evidence of the recognition of Indigenous rights in Canadian law.

It states the existence of Indigenous land title, establishes that only the Crown can buy lands from First Nations, and forbids settlers from claiming Indigenous land.

Paves the way for the Supreme Court of Canada to rule in various cases over subsequent years that Indigenous title pre-existed and survived colonial occupation, and that Indigenous rights to harvest resources from their territories exist.<sup>10</sup>

**The societal and political influence Indigenous peoples held before the War of 1812 is destroyed. After the war, Indigenous peoples become out-numbered by settlers, and the era of self-reliance and self-governance ends.**



## ACTION

Here are some actions you can consider taking to engage your business in reflection and learning:

### 1. Invite an Indigenous person to your workplace to talk about the history of Indigenous peoples.

We've seen that not enough Canadians know the history of Indigenous peoples from an Indigenous perspective. And we know that hearing Indigenous voices tell their own story is essential to learning and understanding.

- ▶ Find out about organizations in your area that can provide an Indigenous speaker for an in-house session. This person could be from an Indigenous advocacy group, friendship centre or career centre; a business person, author, artist or academic.
- ▶ Collaborate with the individual or organization to develop an education session that meets both your needs.
- ▶ Convene senior and, if possible, all staff to participate in the session.
- ▶ Direct employees to additional educational resources on the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Here are some places to start:
  - [www.decolonization.wordpress.com/decolonization-readings](http://www.decolonization.wordpress.com/decolonization-readings)
  - [www.unwrittenhistories.com/imagining-a-better-future-an-introduction-to-teaching-and-learning-about-settler-colonialism-in-canada](http://www.unwrittenhistories.com/imagining-a-better-future-an-introduction-to-teaching-and-learning-about-settler-colonialism-in-canada)
  - [wherearethekids.ca/en](http://wherearethekids.ca/en)
  - [www.cbc.ca/firsthand/blog/8th-fire-wabs-walk-through-history](http://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/blog/8th-fire-wabs-walk-through-history)
  - [www.cbc.ca/missingandmurdered](http://www.cbc.ca/missingandmurdered)
  - [www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/21-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-indian-act-1.3533613](http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/21-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-indian-act-1.3533613)
  - [www.nfb.ca/film/we\\_were\\_children/trailer/we\\_were\\_children\\_trailer](http://www.nfb.ca/film/we_were_children/trailer/we_were_children_trailer)
  - [www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/introduction.aspx](http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/introduction.aspx)

#### 1812 Native American War

Indigenous peoples fought and died alongside the British and ceded territory across North America through treaties, but in the end lose their request to be recognized as a nation.<sup>11,12,13</sup>

**The colonial approach to expansion and economic development marginalizes and excludes Indigenous peoples, reflecting the prevailing negative and superior attitudes of settlers. There is no concern for impact on the Indigenous way of life, land or resources (depletion, disease, introduction to and reliance on European goods). This has devastating effects on Indigenous communities. The economy and new colonial "nation" are built in large part through exploitation; Indigenous peoples are excluded from realizing economic and social benefit.**

#### 1836 Railway

First railway opens, further stimulating trade and industry, and uprooting Indigenous peoples.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Learn more about Indigenous culture and perspectives.

Learning about Indigenous cultural traditions, spirituality and languages adds a significant dimension to the understanding of Indigenous history and experiences. Indigenous artists, musicians, writers, performers and others shape and enrich the country's culture, connecting Canadians to new and greater understanding of the past, and providing different lenses through which to see the present and the future.

- ▶ Explore Indigenous-led learning programs developed and designed to help people in business settings learn more about the Indigenous experience and culture:
  - 4 Seasons of Reconciliation: [www.reconciliationeducation.ca](http://www.reconciliationeducation.ca)
  - Legacy of Hope: [www.legacyofhope.ca](http://www.legacyofhope.ca)
  - Indigenous Cultural Safety Continuous Learning Series: [www.icscollaborative.com/home](http://www.icscollaborative.com/home)
  - Indigenous Reconciliation Group: [www.reconciliationgroup.ca/icc](http://www.reconciliationgroup.ca/icc)
  - Wabano: [www.wabano.com/education/ics](http://www.wabano.com/education/ics)
  - Indigenous Tourism: [www.indigenoustourism.ca/en](http://www.indigenoustourism.ca/en)
  - Beaded Dreams: [www.beadeddreams.ca/pages/pow-wow-schedule](http://www.beadeddreams.ca/pages/pow-wow-schedule)
  - Prairie Edge: [www.prairieedge.com/tribe-scribe/pow-wow-etiquette](http://www.prairieedge.com/tribe-scribe/pow-wow-etiquette)

## 3. Learn about and acknowledge the history of the land where you do business.

It is not uncommon now to see or hear an organization make a statement acknowledging that the land on which it operates is the traditional land of one or more Indigenous peoples. This is an important action for you to take on the journey to reconciliation. When you learn about the history of the land your organization occupies, and its traditional use by Indigenous peoples, you acknowledge their history and experience. When you share this information with your employees and business community, you help educate them about this history. And when you make the land acknowledgment statement part of regular business practices, you demonstrate respect for Indigenous peoples and the land.

- ▶ Work with Indigenous communities to understand the history of the land and develop a land acknowledgement statement. Here are some examples you can use as a guide:
  - Amnesty International's "Activism Skills: Land and Territory Acknowledgement": [www.amnesty.ca/blog/activism-skills-land-and-territory-acknowledgement](http://www.amnesty.ca/blog/activism-skills-land-and-territory-acknowledgement)
  - *Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory*: [www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/caut-guide-to-acknowledging-first-peoples-and-traditional-territory-2017-09.pdf](http://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/caut-guide-to-acknowledging-first-peoples-and-traditional-territory-2017-09.pdf)
- ▶ Identify ways to integrate the statement into everyday practices where it will be visible; for example, in your company's e-mail signature, at the start of meetings, on the website, and in employee workspaces.

### 1858 Fraser River Gold Rush

Massive influx of miners exploits Indigenous territories for economic gain without regard for Indigenous practices, resources or well-being. Mining companies move on once resources are depleted, leaving lasting damaging effects on the land and local economy.

Indigenous peoples are discouraged from mining by non-Indigenous miners in an attempt to limit competition.<sup>15,16</sup>

### 1869-1870 Red River Rebellion

Indigenous peoples in the Red River Colony, many of them Métis, fear for their culture and land rights under new Canadian control, as the government negotiates transfers of land as if no population exists there.

Rebellion leads to the emergence of Métis leader Louis Riel and creation of Manitoba; government doesn't honour its promise of a province with guaranteed land and cultural rights. The Métis soon leave their territory in an attempt to defend their culture.<sup>17</sup>

### 1870 Extermination of the buffalo

Traditionally nomadic, the Blackfoot Tribe is forced to adopt colonial ranching and farming practices, settling in permanent reservations after systematic commercial buffalo hunting by Europeans depletes their primary food source.

Periods of starvation and deprivation result in the tribe ceding most of its lands in exchange for annuities of food and medical aid, as well as help in learning to farm.<sup>18,19</sup>

## Huron University College Land Acknowledgement<sup>vii</sup>

We [I] would like to acknowledge the history of the traditional territory on which this university stands. We [I] would also like to respect the longstanding relationships of the three local First Nations groups of this land and place in Southwestern Ontario. The Attawandaran (Neutral) peoples once settled this region alongside the Algonquin and Haudenosaunee peoples, and used this land as their traditional beaver hunting grounds.

The three other longstanding Indigenous groups of this geographic region are: the Anishinaabe Peoples (also referred to as the Three Fires Confederacy including; Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatami Nations); the Haudenosaunee Peoples (also known as the Iroquoian people or Six Nations including Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscorora); and, the Leni-Lunaape Peoples (also referred to as the Delaware and/or Munsee).

The three First Nations communities closest in proximity to this University are: Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (part of the Anishinaabe); Oneida Nation of the Thames (part of the Haudenosaunee); and, Munsee-Delaware Nation (part of the Leni-Lunaape).

### 4. Explore implicit and/or unconscious biases.

Hidden or unconscious biases against Indigenous peoples block the way toward reconciliation. It is important to involve managers and staff at all levels of your business in identifying barriers. This means exploring and identifying individual and corporate attitudes, operating assumptions, policies and practices.

Indigenous-led cultural sensitivity and learning programs and resources have been developed specifically for businesses interested in reconciliation. Programs can include participatory exercises and workshops, role-playing, talking circles and more, often drawing on traditional Indigenous cultural practices to immerse participants in the process. These kinds of programs and exercises help you and your employees become more open-minded, reflective and sensitive to unconscious and conscious biases in the workplace. Remember that the goal is to focus on changing behaviours. This is not about putting staff in a room for one day of training that makes them feel bad for everything they've ever thought. Rather, it's about sharing practical strategies that will help them change behaviours moving forward.

- ▶ Explore Indigenous-led learning and training agencies, and programs designed to help you explore and overcome racism and discrimination in the workplace.
  - Kairos Blanket Exercise: [www.kairosblanketexercise.org/](http://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/)
  - *Canadian Geographic Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*: [www.canadiangeographic.com/educational\\_products/activities/ipac\\_gfm/Info\\_Resources\\_EN.pdf](http://www.canadiangeographic.com/educational_products/activities/ipac_gfm/Info_Resources_EN.pdf)
- ▶ Set a new standard for how employees are expected to behave in the workplace, and identify confidential ways for employees to report inappropriate behaviours.

**1880**  
British pass Arctic to Canada

Arctic territory is passed by Britain to Canada and, as with other transactions, Indigenous peoples on the land are neither consulted nor informed.

Government interest in the region grows only when mineral and oil discoveries make it more valuable and attract a non-Indigenous population. Traditional order and way of life are threatened.<sup>20</sup>

**1896**  
Klondike Gold Rush

Gold is discovered by two members of the Tagish First Nation and an American who had married a Tagish woman.

The Gold Rush leaves behind infrastructure, supplies and governance that support continued development of the area, but it causes upheaval and disenfranchisement for Indigenous peoples, who are marginalized.<sup>21</sup>

**1873**  
Cypress Hills massacre and creation of the RCMP

After more than 20 Indigenous peoples are killed by a group of traders from Montana who infiltrated Indigenous territory, the North-West Mounted Police (later RCMP) is created to improve authority west of Winnipeg.

Policy is developed as a demonstration of an impartial justice system, but officials use this new authority to keep Indigenous communities from resisting the spread of colonial settlement.<sup>22</sup>

# #2 LEADING TRANSFORMATION



## REFLECTION

Reconciliation is the responsibility of all Canadians. And it can start with your commitment. People in a position of leadership like yourself can help begin the process of reconciliation by learning about the history of Indigenous people and colonization in Canada, and then using this learning as a tool to lead effectively and consciously.

A commitment to reconciliation is also an investment in the future success of your business, your community and the country—and, importantly, Indigenous peoples. Canada’s Indigenous population is the fastest growing and youngest demographic in this country.<sup>viii</sup> It represents the greatest opportunity to address many economic and business growth challenges. New and improved partnerships between Indigenous peoples and business leaders can provide benefits to everyone and, at the same time, advance the essential work of reconciliation. If Canada is going to succeed, everyone needs to work together on this journey.

Remember that true collaboration is about reciprocity and creating shared value, not about taking advantage of Indigenous communities for your exclusive benefit. True partnerships result from the actions you take, such as working with Indigenous business and reconciliation experts to find ways to partner with Indigenous enterprises, and put collaboration at the heart of your business practices.

When you take the first steps toward reconciliation, you demonstrate the possibilities and potential of reconciliation to other business leaders. With your leadership, you can help find transformational ways for the private sector and Indigenous communities to come together for mutual benefit.

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. ([www.ictinc.ca](http://www.ictinc.ca)) provides educational training and services related to the Indigenous Economic case.

Additionally, this paper published by the Shareholder Association for Research & Education (SHARE) can help you learn more about the general business case for reconciliation: [https://share.ca/documents/investor\\_briefs/Social/2017/Business\\_and\\_Reconciliation\\_How\\_can\\_investors\\_evaluate\\_the\\_efforts\\_of\\_Canadian\\_public\\_companies.pdf](https://share.ca/documents/investor_briefs/Social/2017/Business_and_Reconciliation_How_can_investors_evaluate_the_efforts_of_Canadian_public_companies.pdf)

**1828**  
First Residential school opens

**The colonial way of life is presumed to be superior, leading to the implementation of racist policies and rejection of non-European culture. This results in acts of cultural genocide and human rights violations carried out against Indigenous peoples by the government as it pursues assimilation.**

The government funds a network of “boarding schools” for Indigenous peoples to assimilate them into the dominant colonial “Canadian” culture, by removing them from the influence of their own cultures.

Indigenous children are deprived of learning cultural practices, beliefs and languages. Many are exposed to widespread physical and sexual abuse.<sup>23</sup>

**1857**  
*Gradual Civilization Act*

Government passes a bill based on the colonial economic and cultural concept of private land ownership. The intention is to assimilate Indigenous peoples, and diminish their power by encouraging enfranchisement: allowing “debt-free, educated Indians of good moral character” to relinquish their status in exchange for land and voting rights.<sup>24</sup>

## ACTION

Here are some actions you can consider taking to lead transformation in the workplace:

### 1. Be a reconciliation champion.

The first step toward a new vision for the future is making a commitment to reconciliation. You might not understand everything about it, and probably have a long list of questions about what making this commitment means for you and your business. What's important in this early phase is that your commitment is genuine and rooted in the learning you have done so far, and you have the desire to make a meaningful contribution to advancing reconciliation.

This isn't about appearances or meeting legal requirements. It's about walking the walk in your role as a business leader, and a citizen. What you do in the day-to-day, at work and in your community, makes you a champion and—equally important—shows other business leaders what they can do.

- ▶ Make a visible commitment to reconciliation and share it with your internal and external audiences. Remember that it should come from a genuine place of wanting to advance reconciliation in a meaningful way, not just for the sake of appearances. Here is a sample commitment statement to get you started:
  - Former Premier Kathleen Wynne's Letter of Commitment for the Province of Ontario: [www.ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples](http://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples)
- ▶ Use “two-eyed seeing” when making organizational decisions, even if they don't seem directly related to reconciliation. Engage senior staff in the process so they can learn about and try two-eyed seeing. Doing this regularly will build the practice and habit in your workplace.
- ▶ Connect with others in your industry or sector who are working on reconciliation. You can share experiences, talk about the challenges and begin building a critical mass of business people committed to advancing reconciliation. Together, you can work to engage others and help develop wider understanding of the importance of reconciliation.

**1867**  
Confederation

Union of the British North American colonies (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Province of Canada) forms the new nation of Canada.

Confederation excludes Indigenous peoples, and the new federal government assumes responsibility for Indigenous Affairs. New treaties move Indigenous communities onto smaller areas of land called “reserves”.<sup>25</sup>

**1876**  
*Indian Act*

Establishes policies that allow the government to control most aspects of Indigenous life (status, land resources, wills, education, band administration, etc.), and are used to promote assimilation into Euro-Canadian society.<sup>26</sup>

**1920**  
Mandatory residential school attendance

Federal legislation requires that all Indigenous children attend residential schools.<sup>27</sup>

Peter Henderson Bryce publishes *The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice* (1922), yet with knowledge of the crime and torture being inflicted on Indigenous communities, the Government of Canada takes no action.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Be transparent about where you're at and what you want to accomplish.

There's no hiding the fact that advancing reconciliation is a complex and demanding process. It's not going to happen overnight. It's not something you can undertake on your own. It's important to get help from knowledgeable, experienced, expert individuals and organizations. You can start by being transparent with others about what you don't know, and what kind of help you think you need.

- ▶ Talk with Indigenous experts to help you plan a process that matches your and your company's capacity and resources. Working together with Indigenous resources to move forward is the spirit of collaboration and reconciliation in action. Here are some organizations that can help:
  - Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business: [www.ccab.com](http://www.ccab.com)
  - Converging Pathways Consulting: [www.convergingpathways.ca](http://www.convergingpathways.ca)
  - IndigenousWorks: [www.indigenousworks.ca/en/about](http://www.indigenousworks.ca/en/about)
  - Indigenuity Consulting Group: [indigenuity.ca](http://indigenuity.ca)
  - Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.: [www.ictinc.ca/blog/topic/events](http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/topic/events)
  - Indigenous Reconciliation Group: [www.reconciliationgroup.ca/resources](http://www.reconciliationgroup.ca/resources)
  - Reconciliation Canada: [www.reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/current-programs-initiatives](http://www.reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/current-programs-initiatives)
  - First Peoples Group: [www.firstpeoplesgroup.com/](http://www.firstpeoplesgroup.com/)
  - Yellowhead Institute: [www.yellowheadinstitute.org](http://www.yellowheadinstitute.org)

There are also many Indigenous-led organizations working on reconciliation at the provincial/territorial and community levels

## 3. Translate intention into action.

There are many ways you can take action to advance reconciliation and reach the goals you set for your business. Start with one thing: big enough to make measurable change, visible enough to be noticed by others, and defined enough to be manageable within your company. For example, one practical place to begin implementing reconciliation-focused practices is your procurement process.

- ▶ Actively seek Indigenous suppliers, sub-contractors and partners. Identify Indigenous-led businesses and Indigenous individuals in your industry and community.
- ▶ Create an opportunity to partner with an Indigenous business, such as a joint bid or proposal.

**1928**

First *Sexual Sterilization Act* passed in Alberta

Intended to "protect the gene pool", the *Act* targets mentally and physically disabled persons, forcing the sterilization of thousands of women.

Indigenous women are disproportionately targeted. Indigenous peoples represent approximately three percent of Alberta's population, but comprise 25% of individuals forcibly sterilized under the *Act*, often unknowingly and without consent.<sup>29,30</sup>

**1933**

Indigenous parents lose custody

Upon the forcible surrender of legal custody by parents, legal guardianship of children attending residential schools is assumed by the principals.

All rights of Indigenous parents are taken away. Families are torn apart.<sup>31</sup>

**1950 to 1970**

Extermination of Inuit sled dogs

Citing health and safety concerns, Inuit sled dogs are slaughtered by police.

Extermination of the dogs, who are integral to the Inuit nomadic way of life, forces the Inuit to move to permanent communities.<sup>32</sup>

The steps for putting this example into action can apply to other aspects of your business too, and provide a template for planning and action:

- ▶ Collaborate with reconciliation consultants who can review and help refine your policies and practices. Here are some organizations that can help:
  - Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business: [www.ccab.com](http://www.ccab.com)
  - Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.: [www.ictinc.ca/blog/developing-your-indigenous-procurement-strategy](http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/developing-your-indigenous-procurement-strategy)
  - Government of Canada Indigenous Business Directory: [www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccc\\_bt-rec\\_ec.nsf/eng/h\\_00011.html](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ccc_bt-rec_ec.nsf/eng/h_00011.html)
  - Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council: [www.camsc.ca](http://www.camsc.ca)
  - Union Gas First Nation and Métis Business List: [www.uniongas.com/about-us/indigenous-affairs/business-list](http://www.uniongas.com/about-us/indigenous-affairs/business-list)
  - Indiana Corporation (Quebec-Labrador): [www.quebecautochtone.net/en](http://www.quebecautochtone.net/en)
  - Ontario Aboriginal Business Directory: [www.lrcsde.lrc.gov.on.ca/aboriginalbusinessdirectory](http://www.lrcsde.lrc.gov.on.ca/aboriginalbusinessdirectory)
  - Indigenous Business and Investment Council: [www.bcibic.ca](http://www.bcibic.ca)
  - British Columbia Indigenous Business Listings: [catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/bc-indigenous-business-listings](http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/bc-indigenous-business-listings)
- ▶ Identify Indigenous groups that you want to reach and engage, such as prospective suppliers and employees.
- ▶ Develop and implement outreach and engagement strategies.
- ▶ Establish short-, medium- and long-term goals and an evaluation plan, but remember that reconciliation is not a linear process. You should consider using an evaluation model such as the Indigenous Medicine Wheel that can help you break away from a conventional method of assessment in order to capture outcomes and feedback that would otherwise be omitted.

1957

Relocation of the Inuit

After being relocated—without consent—to unfamiliar, remote territory, Inuit communities allege that they are being used as pawns by the government to establish sovereignty in the High Arctic. The government denies these allegations and claims the move is in response to perceived shortages of game, and to benefit the Inuit.<sup>33</sup>

**Indigenous communities continue to be marginalized and disproportionately suffer economically and socially, despite contributions and sacrifices made for the well-being of the nation.**

1914-1918

World War I

Indigenous and non-Indigenous soldiers serve side by side in integrated units.

After the war, Indigenous vets are largely shut out of benefits for returning soldiers, as they are already considered “looked after” as Status Indians. The *Soldier Settlement Act* meant to help soldiers begin farming does not apply to Indigenous peoples, and land is confiscated from reserves for non-Indigenous soldiers.<sup>34</sup>

# CASE STUDY

## PUTTING COLLABORATION INTO PRACTICE

### Partners: Indigenous-focused Health Clinic and University Program

Core values: Relationships, Reciprocity, Capacity Building



A university midwifery training program in Toronto had a long-standing policy to hold two dedicated spots for Indigenous applicants in order to increase access to the midwifery education program. However, Indigenous students in the program struggled, and retention and success rates were lower than among their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Seventh Generation Midwives of Toronto (SGMT), a midwifery practice serving downtown Toronto and Aboriginal communities, opened in 2006. The university asked SGMT to join the pool of organizations providing placements for students in the university program. Seeing an opportunity to help increase the number of Indigenous midwives, SGMT requested a meeting with the university.

The result was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) designating SGMT as a specialized practice site for self-identified Indigenous students, and non-Indigenous students whenever possible. This arrangement has been so successful that requests from Indigenous students now exceed the number of available placements. Practice positions are assigned through a lottery.

SGMT offers a dedicated learning opportunity that respects the challenges, needs and desires of Indigenous students, many of whom live with the same impacts of colonization as their clients. Students can practice their craft within a framework that integrates current midwifery knowledge and skills with Indigenous traditional knowledge and practices. The university-SGMT partnership also fosters awareness and skills among non-Indigenous placement students and associate midwives to encourage the use of culturally safe care. (Culturally safe care respects the cultural concerns and needs of the care recipient, and acknowledges that imposition of the care giver's cultural beliefs could disadvantage the recipient.)<sup>ix,x</sup>

Direct impacts of this 10-year MOU include (but are not limited to):

- A year-over-year increase in the number of Indigenous midwifery program graduates.
- A ten-fold increase in the number of Indigenous midwives working in the SGMT practice—from only one in 2006 to 10 in 2019.
- Significant contribution to the total number of Indigenous midwifery students working across Canada: More than one-third of the 60+ known Indigenous midwives trained or worked at SGMT.
- Increased leadership capacity at all levels, from local to international.
- Ongoing commitment of university's midwifery program to the growth of Indigenous midwifery and reconciliation—through development of a now-required Indigenous midwifery core course, and the addition of an Indigenous midwifery faculty position.



# #3 INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES



## REFLECTION

Canada is a diverse society, and Canadians are proud of it. They uphold diversity and inclusion as core values that they believe make this country a stronger, better place to live. An inclusive workplace promotes dignity and respect for all employees, and provides an environment where everyone can participate and work to their full potential.<sup>xi</sup> It welcomes all ethnicities, genders and abilities. It recognizes the unique contributions of each member. In an inclusive workplace, Indigenous peoples are understood, recognized and supported for the unique value and values they bring to the company.

But all too often these differences are seen as differentiating in a negative way, and discriminatory behaviours and racist attitudes take hold as dislike, mistrust, insult, avoidance and exclusion. As a result, Indigenous peoples face both social and systemic barriers to employment and career advancement. For far too many Indigenous peoples, workplace inclusion is not a reality.

### Social barriers

- ▶ *False characterizations and stereotyping of Indigenous peoples* as lazy, addicted (therefore unreliable or untrustworthy) and the cause of “their” problems. These misconceptions, as well as misinformation (such as, Indigenous peoples don’t pay taxes and get free housing) can lead to resentment, marginalization and discrimination, and prevent Indigenous people from being hired, being promoted or staying at their job.<sup>xii</sup> Many Indigenous peoples hide their native status so their careers aren’t limited by pervasive and persistent racism and discrimination.
- ▶ *Cultural differences* that can create distrust, disrespect and misunderstanding in the workplace.<sup>xii</sup>
- ▶ *Misconceptions and resentment about “special treatment” for Indigenous job candidates:* ATD Economics report, *Debunking Myths Surrounding Canada’s Aboriginal Population*, shows that many Canadians falsely believe Canada has a hiring quota for Indigenous peoples. This misconception can lead people to think that a less qualified candidate will get the job just because they’re Indigenous.<sup>xiii</sup>

### 1929-1939 Great Depression

As demand for traditional goods, such as fur, plummets and families fall into poverty, Indigenous peoples try to find work in new fields. In an attempt to deal with nationwide economic problems, the federal government cuts back on spending, including relief funds for the provinces. Indigenous peoples are among the first to lose their jobs, and throughout the period have significantly lower earnings than non-Indigenous people. Ongoing restriction of rights to access to traditional lands for hunting and fishing compounds problems of hunger and poverty during this period.<sup>34, 35</sup>

### 1939-1945 World War II

After the comradery Indigenous veterans experience as soldiers, many struggle with the return to racism and marginalization.

Indigenous veterans face more challenges than their non-Indigenous comrades to successfully re-establishing themselves in everyday life. Indian Affairs handles most of the case files in ways that disadvantage Indigenous veterans, affecting whether they receive their benefits.<sup>34</sup>

**The colonial vision for “Canada” is a united nation from sea to sea. Various documents, declarations and agreements culminate in the creation of Canada as it is known today. However, the balance of power in the country’s formation is always between the Crown and leaders of its colonies, and never inclusive of Indigenous peoples (who colonial settlers assumed are inferior). Policies continue to be used to exert control and power over Indigenous peoples and drive the process of assimilation—often in the guise of being in Indigenous peoples’ best interest.**

## Systemic barriers

- ▶ *Bias among employers toward candidates with academic credentials and industry-specific experience* over those with transferrable skills and experiences: This marginalizes many Indigenous candidates who have equivalent qualifications but have taken a different path to acquire them.<sup>xiv</sup>
- ▶ *Lack of awareness amongst Indigenous peoples about employment opportunities*: Indigenous peoples are often unaware of employment opportunities because they are largely promoted in mainstream forums.
- ▶ *Other structural barriers that prevent Indigenous peoples from participating in the workforce*: Poor literacy and education levels; for those living in remote and rural communities, lack of transportation, child care and/or access to employment services; systemic poverty that makes it difficult for people to seek, secure and hold a job; and more.<sup>xii</sup>

The benefits of inclusion to businesses are many. Employees from different backgrounds and with a variety of experiences bring: new knowledge and perspectives; different approaches to ideation and problem solving; and, access to their networks of skilled and talented people, among other benefits. A diverse and inclusive workplace means greater productivity, more innovation, a collaborative workforce and a better bottom line. When you understand the barriers facing Indigenous job-seekers and employees, and what underlies them, you can look at how to improve your business strategies, policies and practices to support inclusion.

1931

*Statute of Westminster*

Grants Canada independence from British regulations, and the freedom to pass, amend and repeal laws within an autonomous legal system.<sup>36</sup>

1949

Newfoundland joins Canada

The dream of Canada's colonial founders of a nation from sea to sea is achieved.<sup>37</sup>

1960

*Canadian Bill of Rights*

The earliest expression of human rights law at the federal level in Canada.<sup>38</sup>

## ACTION

Here are some actions you can consider taking to create a more inclusive workplace:

### 1. Develop workplace policies and procedures that contribute to diversity and inclusion.

Depending on how diverse and inclusive your business is now, a review of plans, policies and procedures is an important first step and just might turn up some issues and policy needs you haven't considered or confronted before. For example:

- Do your HR policies support employees' needs to observe their religious holidays and spiritual practices, or to wear certain garments and accessories?
- Do they accommodate different cultural bereavement periods and practices?
- Do hiring policies and practices include actively increasing diversity in your workplace?

And—specific to reconciliation—do your plans, policies and practices support advancement of reconciliation in your operations and among your employees?

- ▶ Create a workplace policy based on best practices for anti-discrimination and diversity. Some helpful resources can be found here:
  - Government of Canada: [www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-workplace.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-workplace.html)
  - Canadian Human Rights Commission: [www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/equal-employment-opportunities-0](http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/equal-employment-opportunities-0)
  - Canadian Chamber of Commerce: [www.chamber.ca/media/pictures-videos/170511-reconciliation-with-canadas-indigenous-peoples/](http://www.chamber.ca/media/pictures-videos/170511-reconciliation-with-canadas-indigenous-peoples/)
  - Canadian Federation of Independent Business: [www.cfb-fcei.ca/en](http://www.cfb-fcei.ca/en)
  - The Conference Board of Canada: [www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/orgperform/research/diversity-inclusion.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/orgperform/research/diversity-inclusion.aspx)
  - Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion: [www.ccdi.ca](http://www.ccdi.ca)
  - Government of Canada anti-racism resources: [www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/resources.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/resources.html)
  - Egale Corporate Equity Training: [www.egale.ca/corporate-equity-training/](http://www.egale.ca/corporate-equity-training/)
  - Conference Board of Canada, *Employer's Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People with Disabilities*: [www.conferenceboard.ca/docs/default-source/pdf\\_downloads/7159\\_accessibility\\_toolkit-2015\\_rpt.pdf?sfvrsn=a98e7013\\_2&pdf=toolkit](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/docs/default-source/pdf_downloads/7159_accessibility_toolkit-2015_rpt.pdf?sfvrsn=a98e7013_2&pdf=toolkit)
  - Canada Research Chairs, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring and Retention*: [www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/best\\_practices-pratiques\\_exemplaires-eng.aspx](http://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/best_practices-pratiques_exemplaires-eng.aspx)
  - CMF Trends, *Resources to improve workplace inclusion and diversity*: [trends.cmf-fmc.ca/directories/inclusion-and-diversity/](http://trends.cmf-fmc.ca/directories/inclusion-and-diversity/)

1960

Indigenous Federal Enfranchisement

Portions of the Canada Elections Act are repealed to grant the federal vote to Status Indians. Under previous law, Indigenous peoples had to relinquish status in exchange for the right to vote. These changes to the *Act* cause confusion and fear among Indigenous peoples that lasts for many years, as they don't trust the government to hold up its side of the agreement, or understand the new law.

Quebec is the last province to enfranchise Indigenous peoples. (1969)<sup>39</sup>

1969

White Paper (*Statement on Indian Policy*)

The White Paper proposes dismantling the *Indian Act* by eliminating "Indian" as a separate legal status, as a way to achieve equality among all Canadians.

Social inequality of Indigenous peoples in Canada is acknowledged, but this acknowledgement is strongly opposed by Indigenous leaders nationwide, who view it as the government's culminating attempt to culturally assimilate Indigenous peoples into mainstream culture.<sup>40,41</sup>

**Now an independent nation, Canada is not as strong or united as leaders might have assumed. Indigenous communities take visible action, by demonstrating against issues that continue to oppress their peoples. Disparity between the government and Indigenous peoples is brought to the nation's attention.**

- ▶ Consult with staff at all levels of your company to identify areas for improving policies, practices and workspaces to enhance inclusiveness. They'll have valuable insights based on their observations and experiences at their current and former workplaces.
- ▶ Meet with your staff to introduce new policies and procedures. This is another opportunity to talk with them about reconciliation, its importance, and how the policies and procedures will help advance it in your workplace. Encourage your employees to report behaviour in the workplace that makes them feel uncomfortable or under-supported.
- ▶ Promote your commitment to equal opportunity. Many companies have equal opportunity employer statements that you can adapt for your business. Here are a few samples for you to draw from:
  - “Why EEO Statements Fall Short” <https://resources.workable.com/tutorial/eeo-statement>
  - *Employment Equity: A Toolkit for PSAC Members*: [www.psaunion.ca/sites/psac/files/attachments/pdfs/employment-equity-toolkit-updated-2018-july-en.pdf](http://www.psaunion.ca/sites/psac/files/attachments/pdfs/employment-equity-toolkit-updated-2018-july-en.pdf)
  - Indigenous Works: [www.indigenousworks.ca/en/products/item/inclusion-continuum](http://www.indigenousworks.ca/en/products/item/inclusion-continuum)
- ▶ Track your diversity progress from year to year. Key things to consider are:
  - Changes in composition of your workforce (cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, ages, disability)
  - Whether rates and levels of promotion and advancement reflect the diversity of your employees
  - Changes to employee satisfaction related to inclusion in the workplace
  - Here are some examples of tracking tools that you can adapt to your needs:
    - *Welcoming Workplaces Diversity Assessment Tool*: [workplaceinitiatives.novascotia.ca/welcoming-workplaces/diversity-assessment-tool](http://workplaceinitiatives.novascotia.ca/welcoming-workplaces/diversity-assessment-tool)
    - *Strengthening Diversity in Your Workplace: A Self-Assessment Tool*: [www.yorkwelcome.ca/wps/wcm/connect/immigration/b4fd0295-4f20-4941-8a6e-e1cc76d30a2e/SelfAssessmentTool.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](http://www.yorkwelcome.ca/wps/wcm/connect/immigration/b4fd0295-4f20-4941-8a6e-e1cc76d30a2e/SelfAssessmentTool.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)

## 2. Develop a recruitment strategy to reach potential Indigenous job candidates.

Let's face it, if you only hire people that look like you or from within your own network, we're never going to make any headway on the diversity front. Hiring Indigenous peoples is a significant step toward reconciliation, and helps break the cycle of exclusion that perpetuates unemployment and poverty.

- ▶ Create an inclusive recruitment strategy that will help:
  - Increase visibility of and access to job postings and ads among Indigenous peoples.
  - Make Indigenous peoples more aware of your business as an equal opportunity employer, and your commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
  - Improve access to company and job information (e.g., social media tools, language, etc.).
  - Engage employees in putting the word out.

**1969-1978**

Red Power Movement

Indigenous youth, known as the Red Power movement, lead public demonstrations and marches, rebuking the White Paper and demanding fair and appropriate action on Indigenous issues.

The proposal is reluctantly revoked by the government.<sup>42</sup>

**1990**

Oka Crisis

Indigenous peoples protest the proposed expansion of a golf course and condo development on land that includes Indigenous burial ground. The army is called in to end the standoff between police and Indigenous peoples.

The expansion is eventually cancelled. This event inspires movements and actions by Indigenous peoples across the country through subsequent years, and plays an important role in the establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.<sup>43</sup>

**1990**

Elijah Harper blocks Meech Lake Accord

First Nation leader blocks the passage of the Meech Lake Accord, an agreement to gain Quebec's acceptance of the *Constitution Act* which requires a unanimous vote.<sup>44</sup>

“I was opposed to the Meech Lake Accord because we weren't included in the Constitution. We were to recognize Quebec as a distinct society, whereas we as Aboriginal people were completely left out.”  
–Elijah Harper<sup>45</sup>

- Additional resources for creating an inclusive workforce can be found here:
  - Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business: [www.ccab.com](http://www.ccab.com)
  - Converging Pathways Consulting: [www.convergingpathways.ca](http://www.convergingpathways.ca)
  - IndigenousWorks: [www.indigenousworks.ca/en/about](http://www.indigenousworks.ca/en/about)
  - Indigenuity Consulting Group: [indigenuity.ca](http://indigenuity.ca)
  - Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.: [www.ictinc.ca/blog/topic/events](http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/topic/events)
  - Indigenous Reconciliation Group: [www.reconciliationgroup.ca/resources](http://www.reconciliationgroup.ca/resources)
  - Reconciliation Canada: [www.reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/current-programs-initiatives/](http://www.reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/current-programs-initiatives/)
  - Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET): [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html)
- ▶ Consult with your employees for ideas on how to better reach Indigenous candidates. Some will have suggestions based on challenges they faced when looking for their own jobs. Local media outlets, such as radio stations and community newspapers, can also suggest tactics and channels you can use.
- ▶ Collaborate with local Indigenous organizations, friendship centres, and employment and social services to identify and reach potential Indigenous candidates in your area.

### 3. Foster an equal opportunity environment.

Change won't happen overnight. It takes effort to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. Maintaining it requires ongoing attention and effort. You want a workplace where employees are happy in their jobs and proud of their work, treat their colleagues with respect, feel valued by the company, and work collaboratively to achieve business goals. They need to know that they have equal opportunities for recognition and promotion, and that the company is invested in their future success.

- ▶ Ensure that all your employees get the training and support that will help them benefit from equitable consideration and treatment by supervisors and management. This can include: providing on-the-job skills training; professional networking and development through conferences, courses and certificates; leadership training and practice opportunities; mentorship; and culturally-specific supports.

A new-to-employment Indigenous person might need cultural support while adjusting to the new environment. Connect Indigenous employees with each other. Or, arrange for an Indigenous counsellor or Elder from the person's community to be available to do regular check-ins.

#### 2012 Idle No More Movement

An ongoing protest movement founded by three Indigenous women and a non-Indigenous ally and taking issue with Bill C-45, which threatens environmental protection and Indigenous sovereignty.

The movement brought to the fore the divide among Indigenous leaders.<sup>46,47</sup>

**Societal pressure on the Government of Canada to address and take responsibility for the horrific treatment of Indigenous peoples mounts. Policies are revised and enacted to begin the process of taking legislative action to: acknowledge wrong-doing, help restore and protect Indigenous culture, and rectify centuries of cultural genocide and disenfranchisement.**

#### 1973 Calder Case

Recognizes Indigenous title as a legal right based on occupation of traditional territories.<sup>48</sup>

- ▶ Make sure that expectations for behaviour in the workplace are clear, and employees who behave in a discriminatory or racist way receive cultural awareness and sensitivity training in the short term. Importantly, make it clear that long-term and repeated offences won't be tolerated.

Here are some additional steps you can take to foster and maintain an equal opportunity environment:

- ▶ Review and adjust your company's employee evaluation tools and practices to make sure they accommodate the diversity of cultural values in your workforce.
- ▶ Develop a retention strategy that considers recognition and reward (such as salary, promotions and employee awards) in the context of different cultural values and practices in your workplace. Look at such things as how different cultures define achievement and success, and how they view workplace reward systems.
- ▶ Include employees in developing new strategies, practices and tools. They bring invaluable perspective and experience from previous workplaces and their own culture. Their support for and participation in the transition and operation of an equal opportunity environment will help ensure success.
- ▶ Here's a list of agencies that help with equal opportunity:
  - Indspire: [www.indspire.ca](http://www.indspire.ca)
  - FIMESIP: [www.fimesip.ca](http://www.fimesip.ca)
  - ISET: [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html)

Today, corporate culture tends to reward assertiveness and individual achievement over other kinds of development and contribution. Many Indigenous cultures place highest value on creativity and collaboration. You will need to consider whether the measures you set for employee evaluation and reward are relevant to Indigenous employees, and others.

**1982**  
Repatriation of the Constitution

Formally entrenches Indigenous and treaty rights in the supreme law of Canada.<sup>49</sup>

**1985**  
Bill C-31

Amendment of the Indian Act to bring it into line with gender equality under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.<sup>50</sup>

**1992**  
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The report, based on extensive research of historical and current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, makes several recommendations to restructure and repair the relationship. The majority of the recommendations are not implemented.<sup>51</sup>

# #4 OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



## REFLECTION

A cornerstone of reconciliation is a new kind of relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Only through a stronger, healthier exchange can we learn to walk together. People like you can begin to open a new channel for exchange and collaboration through outreach to Indigenous peoples, and engagement with Indigenous-led organizations in your community. This is one of the most important things you can do to advance reconciliation.

As you have learned, Indigenous peoples have been short-changed in their relationships with governments, authorities, businesses, social intuitions and individuals. They haven't been respected or valued. They have been deprived of dignity, freedom, family, land, resources, culture and independence. Trust has been broken again and again. To move forward, relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must put respect and trust at the centre. They must offer mutual and equal benefit to both.

As a business leader you know that relationships can be tested to the breaking point, and snap if the right foundation isn't in place. A strong relationship is about more than you or your business looking good because you are "partnering with Indigenous peoples". Assumptions create weak foundations. Avoid making the mistake of going into a new relationship with a preconceived notion of how the project will benefit Indigenous peoples, or thinking that the partnership will "fix" a problem you think needs fixing. Like any healthy relationship, a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must be guided by four principles that provide a solid foundation for building and sustaining positive, productive and mutually-beneficial relationships:

- ▶ **Trust:** Believing that the other person is operating in good faith, with good intentions.
- ▶ **Respect:** Recognizing and valuing the other person as they are, regardless of the differences between you.
- ▶ **Communication:** Ongoing, honest conversations and dealings with each other; working through differences of perspective, opinion, and practice; and, working together to arrive at mutually beneficial and agreed-upon resolutions.
- ▶ **Commitment:** Keeping your word and using it as a touchstone for business decisions.

Moving forward together requires both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to reach out and engage with each other based on these four principles. This approach is supported by best practices in research and education, which advocates for the four R approach: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility.

**1996**  
Last residential school closes

The last school closes after 168 years, but problems facing Indigenous communities as a result of the system (suicide, alcoholism, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress) persist in Indigenous communities.<sup>52,53</sup>

**1999**  
Nunavut Land Claim Agreement

The largest Indigenous land claim agreement between the Canadian government and the native Inuit people.<sup>54</sup>

**2008-2015**  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Documents the history and lasting impacts of the residential school system, and offers 94 calls to action for Canadians to come together in an effort to repair the damage, and move forward with reconciliation.

Includes a call to action (TRC 92) specifically for the corporate sector, grounded in the themes of engagement, education and equity.<sup>55</sup>

## ACTION

Here are some actions you can consider taking to help build new relationships:

### 1. Invite Indigenous perspective and expertise into your business.

There's no one easy answer to what types of reconciliation activities you should undertake. A good way to start is by undertaking a needs assessment to better understand the types of reconciliation activities that your workplace could help advance.

- ▶ Collaborate with local Indigenous community leaders to introduce them to your business, discuss your overall approach to advancing reconciliation, get their perspectives on the challenges that you're experiencing, and learn how you can build effective ties between your company and Indigenous communities.
- ▶ Create an Indigenous advisory committee, or invite an Indigenous leader to join your board of directors. This will give you a resource for guidance on policy and other matters, and help ensure that two-eyed seeing is happening as part of your corporate governance.
- ▶ Hold a knowledge exchange event with Indigenous and non-Indigenous business leaders to share perspectives and best practices, and improve Indigenous inclusion in your sector.

### 2. Support local Indigenous community causes.

Like most businesses, you likely have an annual charitable giving budget or employee volunteering program. Philanthropic initiatives are excellent ways to get to know Indigenous causes and community-based organizations. They are also a great way for senior leadership and employees alike to get to know Indigenous peoples. A rich relationship will really begin to flourish when philanthropic activity is more than just an exchange of financial resources, and becomes an opportunity to convene, collaborate and take action together.

- ▶ Get to know local Indigenous charities, foundations and associations that are working to advance social causes in your area.
- ▶ Consider how you can support community-based efforts through dedicated long-term partnerships, volunteering and sponsoring programs or events.
- ▶ Consult with Indigenous organizations or leaders to learn where resources are most needed, and how you can best invest your support.

**2016**

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Inquiry

The federal government launches an independent inquiry examining the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The inquiry exposes the devastating impacts of colonialism, racism and sexism on our society.<sup>56</sup>

**2016**

Daniels Decision

Rules that the legal responsibility to legislate on issues related to all Indigenous peoples (including Métis and Non-Status peoples) lies with the federal government, rather than provincial governments.<sup>57</sup>

**2018**

NunatuKavut

The NunatuKavut community works tirelessly to have the rights of their people recognized. On July 12, 2018, the most significant milestone of their journey to date is announced: Acceptance and talks with the Government of Canada on a new land claim process.<sup>58</sup>



### 3. Engage employees in local Indigenous-led community events and celebrations.

First-hand experience is a great way for employees to learn and become more open-minded, reflective and appreciative of Indigenous peoples. Attending local Indigenous art and music festivals and cultural celebrations is a fun way for your employees to learn about Indigenous history, traditions, culture and creativity, and to meet Indigenous people in the community.

- ▶ Organize company outings or offer tickets for events in your area.
- ▶ Check local event listings and contact Indigenous cultural organizations to find out what's coming up.

### 4. Develop a protocol for Elder engagement at governance and management meetings.

An Indigenous Elder is a deeply respected member of an Indigenous community who has acquired significant wisdom and understanding of Indigenous history, teachings, ceremonies, practices and experiences. "Elder" is not defined by age, but by the respect of their communities for the wisdom, harmony and balance of their actions in their teachings. They are deeply committed to sharing their knowledge, providing guidance, and teaching others to respect the natural world so they learn to listen and feel the rhythms of the elements and seasons.<sup>xv</sup>

- ▶ Invite Elders to attend your company's governance and management meetings, and look to them for knowledge and guidance. These two resources provide more information on Elders, their roles, and how to engage with them.
  - [www.ictinc.ca/blog/first-nation-elder-protocol](http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/first-nation-elder-protocol)
  - [cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/ualberta/office-of-the-provost-and-vice-president/indigenous-files/elderprotocol.pdf](http://cloudfront.ualberta.ca/-/media/ualberta/office-of-the-provost-and-vice-president/indigenous-files/elderprotocol.pdf)

**Despite commissions and new policies, lack of action on the part of government continues. Indigenous peoples continue to suffer socially and economically as a result of systemic racism and discrimination.**

#### 1995 Upperwash crisis

As a result of inaction by the federal government related to sacred burial grounds being used as a military camp, members of the Indigenous community occupy the camp in protest. This culminates in police killing an Indigenous protestor.

It is years before an investigation is finally conducted. It reveals how ignorance and racism played a devastating role in the severe mishandling of events by the police.<sup>59</sup>

#### 1999-2002 Burnt Church crisis

Conflict arises between the Burnt Church First Nation and east-coast non-Indigenous fisheries over treaty interpretation that would allow the Indigenous community to fish out of season. Angry non-Indigenous fisherman destroy their traps; leading to a series of standoffs and arrests.

A federal report recommends that Indigenous fishermen should not be allowed to fish out of season, and should attain fishing licences like "regular" fishermen.<sup>60,61</sup>

# WITH THANKS



On behalf of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, we hope that this toolkit has helped grow your understanding of the Indigenous experience, the importance of reconciliation, and the steps along the journey. We thank you for your openness to learning about how you and your business can play a role in advancing reconciliation, and for your willingness to try.

The toolkit identifies actions you can take in four areas: your own reflection and learning, leading reconciliation in your business and community, creating an inclusive workplace, and building relationships with Indigenous peoples. If you take only some of these actions, if you start with only one thing in each area, you will help move reconciliation forward. Do what you can, as you can. Use the toolkit as a guide and a touchstone as you go forward. There is no “right” way to make the journey. What’s important is that you start.

As you go forward, keep looking for ways to connect and collaborate with Indigenous individuals, communities and businesses. It’s the most important action you can take. Only through relationships built on trust and respect can we advance reconciliation. Only by knowing and understanding each other can we move past the barriers of bias, misunderstanding and exclusion, and a history of broken trust.

When we meet, we can talk. When we talk, we will walk the path to reconciliation—together.

**2016**

Attawapiskat crisis

Indigenous community in Northern Ontario declares a state of emergency because of a suicide crisis. The same community declared a state of emergency for lack of housing in 2011. There is inaction at all levels of government.

Having conducted numerous inquiries and reports on the suicide crisis—among many other issues—the government continues to turn a blind eye when Indigenous communities are suffering, most often as a result of its policies and actions, past and present.<sup>62</sup>

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