

RECONCILIATION DIALOGUE



UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

What is UNDRIP?

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an essential document protecting the inherent rights of Indigenous people not only here but across the world. This document sets out how government and the people around government – you, as settler and community members within the local territories you are in – can properly implement or fulfill human rights agreements or conventions affecting Indigenous people.

UNDRIP was the result of many, many years of work by the United Nations reaching out to nearly 370 million Indigenous people in about 90 countries around the world. You can imagine why this document took so long as it is representative of all nations across our globe that expresses their rights in a cultural, linguistics and heritage sense. UNDRIP is a one of a kind documents that is the most advance and comprehensive piece about and on Indigenous peoples' rights.

This document came into fruition and adoption September 13, 2007 which was 20 years after the start of the project in 1985. At the beginning Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US voted against the document. As you know now in 2016 Canada was in support for the document and just in October of 2019 British Columbia has fully signed on to changing legislations and constitutions to include the rights of Indigenous people as outlined in UNDRIP.

This is huge news as UNDRIP consists of 46 articles outlining the main themes of

- (i) The Right to Self Determination
- (ii) The Right to be recognized as distinct peoples
- (iii) The Right to free, prior and informed consent
- (iv) The Right to be free of discrimination

Throughout this presentation, I may not be able to go through absolutely every article but at least key ones that pertain to how we together can make a difference and start to open our minds and hearts to learning in a good way.

PEER REFLECTION:

How do you describe or feel about UNDRIP? What do you want to improve or learn more about?



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What is Reconciliation and how does TRC fit into UNDRIP?

The Oxford¹ dictionary defines Reconciliation as:

- i. The restoration of friendly relations
- ii. The action of making one view or belief compatible with another

“The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Its mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential School (IRS).[...] The TRC hopes to guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect.”²

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report on the history and legacy of Canada’s residential school system just before the New Year of 2016. In this report the TRC “[...]published 94 “calls to action” that urges all levels of government – federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal – to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation.”³

These calls to action are aimed at all levels of government as well as a chance to reflect with peers; throughout this document you will begin to reflect and understand how you can fit into implementing change in a society that hasn’t had the best relationship with our Indigenous relatives. A big piece that needs to be reflected on is how in the TRC’s Calls to Action it recognizes the need for Canada to recognize the United Nations Rights on Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). With each excerpt of knowledge that I can share from my own experience and knowledge I will reflect back on what TRC Calls to Action falls into the reflections I have or what UNDRIP article fits into various pieces on how we can make a change.

PEER REFLECTION:

What do you know about the TRC and how do the TRC and UNDRIP fit into reconciliation in your view?

¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/reconciliation>

² <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=10>

³ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/truth-and-reconciliation-94-calls-to-action-1.3362258>



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PEER REFLECTION:

Whose Indigenous territories and how many Indigenous territories are within and outside the Victoria region without going into Cowichan territory in Duncan?

Culturally Respectful Approaches to Practices

Acknowledging yourself

When it comes to the acknowledgment of yourself or introduction of yourself to an indigenous person, you need to know that it is respectful to introduce yourself but also give a little bit of a personal background of where you come from. I say this because it is a way of connecting at the level that indigenous people introduce themselves.

The way I was taught to introduce myself was to:

Traditional Name first, what nations I come from/ belong to, my colonial name, grandparents name, and parents name.

Sure it may be a long winded introduction but this is following *the traditional laws* of first nation communities; its way for someone to know what family we come from and the teachings we could hold based on where we come from.

TRC 94 calls to action:

Under Language & Culture section 13: We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

UNDRIP Article 26 Part 3: States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Acknowledging the Territory

Acknowledging the Territory is a way of honoring and showing respect for a group of people who have been living and working on this land from time immemorial. It's also following traditional indigenous laws and governance.

The acknowledgment should be made at the beginning of events, conferences, and workshops. It can also be performed before an important meeting or presentation. For large events it is always respectful to have a member of the local First Nation preferably an Elder, perform a welcome if possible.



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The only people who would *Welcome* to the Territory are the First Nations people who are traditionally/originally from the territory. Whereas if you are not from the territory you would *Acknowledge* the Territory.

Sample Acknowledgments

“Welcome everyone and thank you for being here. I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the _____ First Nation. “

“To begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the _____ First Nation.”

“I would like to acknowledge the _____ people whose lands we are on. “

“I would like to acknowledge that I’m on the unceded _____ Territory.”

(What does it mean when some says “We want to acknowledge the **unceded** territory of the _____ First peoples.”= Unceded means that this land was never surrendered, relinquished or handed over in anyway – Each territory is different, for instance here in Lekwungen territory we actually are not unceded territory due to the Douglas Treaty)

Territories

Link to map of BC: http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/inacmp_1100100021016_eng.pdf

Victoria region and further of Indigenous communities:

Lekwungen/ Songhees , Esquimalt Nation, Malahat, T’Sou-ke, W̱SÁNEĆ Territories: Scia’new(Beecher Bay) , Tseycum, Paquachin, Tsawout , Tsartlip

United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples(UNDRIP):

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationships with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations.

Article 9: Indigenous people have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such right.

PEER REFLECTION:

When do you think the last residential school closed? Show of hands

1996 was the last Residential school closure.-



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Effects of Residential School Today – collaborative write up from Andrea Thibodeau & Brianna Bear

Residential schools ultimately ripped away maternal, paternal, familial, personal, cultural and traditional teachings, knowledge and instincts from children who attended but it also affected families. Thousands of children were not shown and never experienced the feelings of gentleness, care, love and affection. Unfortunately, many children also suffered punishment such as: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse. All these negative experiences, feelings and notions attached and haunted children who attended and survived. For those children who survived, they matured and had children of their own. This is where the intergenerational trauma began. These children, who became parents did not know the gentle touch of a parent, and lacked the knowledge of what a healthy role model embodied.

Indigenous communities today, are on their healing journey from the Residential School Era. Though the steps to reconciliation and healing are in progress within many indigenous communities, the effects of Residential school are still present today. The rippled effects are seen and felt in many indigenous communities with the struggle of intergenerational effects of apprehension, separation, and grief through the child welfare system.

“Cumulatively, First Nations children have spent over 66 million nights away from their families. That is 187,000 years of childhood”. First Nations children are still vastly over represented in Canada’s child welfare system. In fact, statistics show that there are more First Nation children in care today than at the peak of Indian Residential School Era. John Beaucage [...] calls this generation of child apprehension “the Millennium Scoop.”⁴

There is still much to be done in terms of helping our Aboriginal Children out of care, but this must first be done within our communities and within the government system. It’s been said to me by many elders that it takes a community to raise a child and when you rip that child away

⁴ <http://www.mediaindigena.com/sarah-hunt/issues-and-politics/apprehending-first-nations-children-a-canadian-tradition-lives-on>



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from its community they lose that sense of identity and connection. So it starts with just recognizing and acknowledging that this trauma continues today and we can help be the ones to change that by helping youth raise their own voices.

Video:

[Verna No.688- Honouring Residential School Survivors - https://vimeo.com/128946322](https://vimeo.com/128946322)

I thought that this was a good video to show in terms of what residential school was and how it still does have effect today. But I do need to mention that this is just one person's story, every person is still on their own journey of healing.

TRC 94 calls to action:

Under Child Welfare, Section 1: We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal Governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care. Parts I,ii,iii,iv,v

United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

Article 8: Assimilation or destruction of culture

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be assimilated – meaning, they have the right not to be forced to take up someone else's culture and way of life, and for their culture not to be destroyed.



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“Our way of communication was through our oral history. We are taught to listen and to carry on that oral tradition. It takes effort to learn and remember. It is important to participate in the teachings. You cannot be careless. That is why we give gifts when we gather to bear witness. You as a listener have a responsibility to remember because it is the story tellers learned experience, there story their knowledge. You now have a responsibility to carry this forward.”

~ Mavis Underwood

Gifts

Gift giving is a protocol that many first nation communities carry on today, from my knowledge it is a way to honor and acknowledge the “transfer of knowledge” that has taken place when it comes to inviting someone to speak, ceremonies, and acknowledgment.

There are different ways in which people including my own two communities Lekwugen and Kwakwaka’wakw give gifts. I’m not saying that my communities hold ceremonies just to give gifts but that when they do hold ceremonies they have gifts for certain people who attend and participate in them. For instance I know in both my own communities and a few others that they call upon witnesses for their ceremonies; when someone is asked to be a witness for the ceremony it means that they trust you to hold on and pass on the story of what happened in this ceremony back to your community and family.

Gifts in general will vary in form, especially in different territories. Though blankets are the main gift here on the coast there are other gifts like traditional medicines, tobacco, and more. If you’re unsure about what kind of gift is appropriate to give to someone, don’t be afraid to reach out and ask.

PEER REFLECTION:

What kind of significant gifts do you give in your families?



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The importance of the blanket

Blankets are one of the common gifts here on the west coast. The importance of the blanket was one topic that was hard for me to describe because in my own knowledge and bringing up it was something that was known from the heart but not always something that was spoke out loud.

The blanket itself can represent legends, stories, events and other perspectives of culture and heritage. Blankets are a form of craftsmanship, artistry, history and generosity. The blanket holds a significant role in Aboriginal culture.

The giving and receiving of a blanket holds the tradition of generosity and blessings. To give a blanket is to demonstrate great respect, honor and admiration for an individual. When receiving a blanket as a gift, the giver holds the individual in very high respect for their generosity and accomplishments. It is believed that receiving a blanket will bring good dreams and prosperity.



When a blanket is placed on an individual, it is like wrapping the respect and admiration of everyone in the community around them physically and spiritually. Wearing blankets is an almost spiritual thing; especially when worn as part of dance for some cultures. Blankets can take on a life of their own; they have a personality and spirit to the owner of them.

UNDRIP Article:

UNDRIP Article 11: The Right to Culture



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Terminology/ communication

- **First Nation:** The native people of Canada to replace the word “Indian.” Umbrella term for those recognized by the Indian Act.
- **Indigenous:** All inclusive term for indigenous people including Metis and Inuit people. It has a sense of connection to the land where we all come from
- **Aboriginal:** Refers to all peoples that are considered to be the first people to inhabit the land
- **Inuit:** The indigenous people of northern Canada
- **Metis:** People of mixed Indigenous and Euro-American ancestry that settled in the areas around the Red and Saskatchewan rivers
- **Reserve:** Land given to the group of First Nation in which they can live and govern
- **Off-Reserve** a term used to describe people, services or objects that are not part of a reserve but relate to indigenous people.
- **Indian:** Legal term under the Indian Act; The act defines who can be an ‘Indian’
- **Status Indian:** A person who is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act.
- **Non-Status Indian:** An ‘Indian’ who is not registered as an ‘Indian’ under the Indian Act
- **Indian Act:** A Canadian legislation first passed in 1876 but amended (changed) several times since. Indian Act outlines who is considered “Indian”. It sets out the federal government obligations to the Indigenous people. It also regulated the management of the Indian reserves, Indian moneys and other resources.



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Resources

Document Resources

Aboriginal Customs and protocol from a westernized view

<http://riic.ca/the-guide/in-the-field/aboriginal-customs-and-protocols/>

Assembly of first Nations: First Nations Ethics Guide on Research and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/fn_ethics_guide_on_research_and_atk.pdf

Beyond 94 – Truth and Reconciliation in Canada – where is Canada at with TRC calls to action

<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>

Reconciliation Canada

<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>

United Nations Declaration on the Right's of Indigenous people – for Indigenous Adolescents

https://coastalfirstnations.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/KIDS_UN_Rights_Indig_Peoples.pdf

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people – document

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

TRC Calls to Action

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Wrapping our ways around them: Aboriginal Communities and the CFCSA Guidebook

<http://www.nntc.ca/docs/aboriginalcommunitiesandthecfcsaguidebook.pdf>

Language Resources

First Voices

<http://www.firstvoices.com/en/home>

Strong Nations – gifts- books- publishing

https://www.strongnations.com/store/item_list.php?it=3&cat=3049

Media & Cultural Teachings/Insight

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

<http://aptn.ca>

APTN kids

<http://aptn.ca/kids/>



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CBC Indigenous

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous>

Media Indigena

<http://www.mediaindigena.com/>

Red Rising Magazine

<http://redrisingmagazine.ca/>

Step up BC: Indigenous Wisdom Protocols guides

<https://stepupbc.ca/sites/default/files/downloadable-material/02%20Aboriginal%20Innovation%20Group-Protocols%20Guide.pdf>

Unreserved (CBC)

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved>

8th Fire Aboriginal Peoples, Canada & The Way Forward

<http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire//2011/11/tv-series-8th-fire.html>

Assessment, different ways of thinking

Indigenous cultural competency self-assessment

<http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-cultural-competency-self-assessment-checklist>

Indigenous peoples worldviews vs western worldviews

<http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews>