

Issue: Records and Document Disclosure

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action:

- #59: We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.
- #81: We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

Background:

- Indian Residential Schools operated in Canada for over 160 years dating back to the 1870's. First Nations children were forcibly taken from their homes by RCMP and sent to Residential Schools. Over 130 Residential Schools were located across Canada and it is estimated that 150,000 First Nations children were taken from their families. The last school closed as recently as 1996.
- 150,000 First Nations children were taken from their families (Source: TRC Report 2015). 90% to 100% suffered severe physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Source: Bryce Report 1907). There was a 40 – 60% mortality rate in Indian Residential Schools (Source: Bryce Report 1907). Over 130 Residential Schools were located across Canada, and the last school closed as recently as 1996 (Source: TRC Report 2015).
- Residential Schools operationalized a policy of "cultural genocide" to systematically destroy the structures and practices that allow a group to continue as a group, in this instance disrupting families to prevent transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

Suggested Messaging:

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave specific steps needed to reconcile the harms felt from Residential Schools – there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.
- Two-thirds of Canadians believe (and four in ten **strongly** believe) that Canadians with no experience in Indian residential schools have a role to play in reconciliation between First Nations and all Canadians.
- For healing to occur there must be a public acknowledgement of the legacy of Residential Schools and commemoration of what they stood for. Public acknowledgement needs to focus on coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward
- We are at the start of a long journey to heal from the destruction and trauma caused by the Residential School system. To find answers about what happened to our children. Together, we can work to fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action while being mindful of our survivors and families, and respectful of their cultural protocols.