

Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders 2022

In 2021, the federal government officially designated September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour children who never returned home and First Nations, Inuit and Métis residential school survivors and their families and communities. The day also ensures commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools. To mark the second National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples invited Indigenous youth (18 to 35 years old) to share their perspectives on the meaning of Truth and Reconciliation and highlight their contributions to their communities and nations.

The committee is honoured to spotlight the strengths of young Indigenous leaders. These are the Voices of Youth Indigenous Leaders 2022.

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24. Wapistan, Gino Pierre
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Name	Logan Beauchamp, He/They
Age	24 years old
Community	Cochrane
Province	Alberta
Identity	Métis
Nation or land claim	Metis Nation of Alberta
Organization	N/A
Language	English

Submission 1:

Truth and Reconciliation, to me, is a multi-staged process that we as a country, are only at the start of. Truth being that beginning. The act of telling the truth is a necessary step in the process of acknowledging wrongdoing and seeking forgiveness. To ask for forgiveness, a person must first explain and acknowledge their wrongdoing, then, if possible, do what they can to remedy the situation and bring about Justice. Once justice has been achieved in the eyes of those affected, they may choose to forgive the perpetrator(s). Only when we have chosen to forgive, will we be able to move on to reconciling with one another.

Truth is not just about the Government acknowledging its own past and current misdoings, it's about every single settler on turtle island, being informed and educated on the whole truth about the history of colonization, the brutal systems of oppression that were built, the systems that still exist today, and how these kinds of factors play into the lower socio-economic status of Indigenous peoples, and their role as settlers in these systems.

If I have learned anything in the past few years, it's that so many settlers do not care enough to educate themselves on the topic. They are essentially ignoring the most important and vital step to achieving reconciliation. The onus has been largely thrust upon us to share our stories and our history with all of those who don't seek it out themselves. Some activists would say that it is not our job to educate those who will not educate themselves, and while I understand their points about becoming burnt out from consistently having to explain these things to others and the feelings of despair that come with the constant repetition, I would argue that it is our job to educate those who will not educate themselves. After all, if we don't do it, who will? Indigenous voices need to be centered on the issue. We cannot pass it off to others who do not share the lived experiences and knowledge around the issue.

Once people learn and accept the truth, then they can help us dismantle the systems that were built generations ago, that still oppress Indigenous Peoples for the benefit of white settlers.

As a young leader in my community, I do my best to share the truth and history wherever and however I can. I do what I can to support Indigenous youth through their hardships and try to empower them to use their voices to tell others that we are not victims to be pitied, coddled, or looked down upon. We are survivors, and we are here to share our truth, and only once our

truth is acknowledged, can we move on to Justice for these wrongs. If we want to move forward in the process, then we need to support each other in continuing these conversations. We also need outside support to continue these conversations of truth because burnout is real, the despair and hopelessness are real. And while Indigenous voices need to be centered, we need the support to continue the work, and the spaces to do it.

Submission 2:

The decisions we make and actions we take today will need to be an antithesis of our status quo today if we want to improve things for those coming seven generations from now. Fixing the societal failures of today and reconciling the history of colonialism and oppression with Indigenous peoples are both required to build a better future for our children and grandchildren, a future where they are not overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System and where they have access to quality education, food, and shelter, and where they can indeed be free from the cycles that bind us today. Getting there is the real question. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was tasked with answering that question. The TRC released 94 calls to action, which call on Canada, its government and its citizens to address the systemic issues that continue to oppress and affect Indigenous peoples in Canada. These calls to action reach into nearly every aspect of Canadian society, addressing the multifaceted and intertwined issues that maintain a lower socioeconomic status for Indigenous peoples. They reach anywhere from child welfare and education to sports and immigration with Calls to Action 25 to 42 explicitly addressing Justice. They call for changes to the Criminal Justice system to address systemic racism, racial discrimination, and biases. I want to bring special attention to Call to Action 30, which reads.

“We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminate the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so”.

While this Call to Action doesn't give any specific direction in addressing Indigenous overrepresentation in the Criminal Justice System, I believe the entire document does. Indigenous overrepresentation in the Criminal Justice System of Canada is multifaceted and has roots in every aspect of Canadian society beyond the reach of the courts. The 94 calls to action address most if not all these aspects that affect the socioeconomic status of Indigenous peoples. So, the best move we can take with the information we currently have would be to fulfill all 94 calls to action and eliminate the social stratification of Indigenous peoples. Only 11 calls to action have been completed since they were released in 2015; that's less than 2 per year. While I have always been of the mindset of “some is better than none”, I think we have done enough waiting for Justice and Reconciliation. If we continue at the same rate, it will take over 62 years in total to fulfill all the calls to action. To make the best life possible for our kin seven generations from now, we need to complete the calls to action sooner to study the results of policy and societal changes and adjust where needed. Canada can't continue dragging its feet and reaching for low hanging fruit.

Submission 3:

Tanshi!

I serve Indigenous youth in my community and even across Canada as an Ambassador of Hope with We Matter. Recently, through this role, I partnered with the school districts in Red Deer to host a full day conference at Red Deer Polytechnic for Indigenous Grade 8 students, with the goal of inspiring hope in themselves, connecting them with local Indigenous leaders, and providing them with some skills and knowledge to not only better picture their future, but also plan out how they will get there. I've gone to several schools in the area to speak to their Indigenous youth, tell them my own story, and help them navigate their own. Throughout my time in Red Deer, I have been an advocate for Indigenous youth and a leader in the community, sitting on the local Friendship society board as the youth representative, working as an educator at an all-Indigenous play school, and helping young Indigenous children learn about the world around them and their culture, through play while remaining cognizant of their own situations, many coming from foster care, completely separated from their culture and homes. I have been on my own journey of reconnecting with my culture and language, and I have been sharing it as much as I can and encouraging and supporting other youth to do the same. I am advancing reconciliation by reconnecting with my culture, and supporting and encouraging other Indigenous youth through the hardships we face, through their own personal hardships, and on their own journeys of reconnecting with and revitalizing our cultures and languages.

Indigenous youth are vital to furthering reconciliation. Indigenous youth are our future, the future of our cultures, and our languages, but they are our leaders today. Around Canada there is Indigenous youth who are leaders in their communities, they are the changemakers and trailblazers who are pushing for justice and reconciliation. We Indigenous youth know firsthand the effects of colonization and intergenerational trauma, and thanks to the technology of today, we are more connected with each other than ever before. This connection that we have is creating a movement across Canada of Indigenous youth, sharing ideas, stories, and culture, and most importantly, we are sharing a passion for justice. We are understanding our situation better than any generation before us, we know where we are, and we know where we need to be. Indigenous youth leadership is bridging the gap between the 21st Century, and centuries of colonial oppression. However, many Indigenous communities still lack the infrastructure to fully participate in contemporary society, namely cellular and internet infrastructure (and more much-needed infrastructure). If we want Indigenous youth to help further reconciliation, then each and every one of us needs access to quality infrastructure that will provide opportunities for engagement and enable them to fully participate in contemporary society. If we engage with and uplift Indigenous youth around the country, we can grow the number of youths working to forward reconciliation and protecting and revitalizing our languages, cultures, and lands.

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Name	Kanisha Brown-Bear, She/Her
Age	25 years old
Community	Tobique First Nation
Province	New Brunswick
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Tobique First Nation/Woalstoqey Territory
Organization	MAWIW Council Incorporation
Language	English

Submission:

Since I was 16 years old I have worked directly with the youth of my community. I've been their camp counsellor to their EA in the classrooms. Working with the youth has always been a major goal in my career, especially the youth of my community Neqotkuk (Tobique) First Nation. I currently work as one of the Youth Coordinators for MAWIW Council Inc. where I create and implement workshops and events to empower the youth in our culture and career paths. I've written and managed a grant from Canada Heritage for a photo restoration project in my community to bridge the gap between the Elders and the youth for history preservation. I made an online site free and readily available with stories of the community from a few Elders, and stories of photos that date back to the early 1900's. My goal is to work as a teacher in the community with history and Indigenous studies as my main focus. I believe that the best way for truth and reconciliation to happen is through the preservation of our history and our language, which coexist in deep rooted support and balance of each other.

Name	Dr. Meghan Beals, She/Her
Age	31 years old
Community	Hampton
Province	Prince Edward Island
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Glooscap First Nation, Hantsport, Nova Scotia
Organization	N/A
Language	English

Submission:

Kwe', My name is Meghan, I am a Mi'kmaw woman from Glooscap First Nation in Nova Scotia. To understand Truth and Reconciliation I have first had to learn my own truth and my peoples truth. I have also had to reconcile my own relationship with my culture and identity as I have grown up in a colonial world that swept truths under a rug.

As an Indigenous physician I strive toward reconciliation by providing two eyed seeing care, intertwining Western and Traditional medicines. As an Indigenous physician going through medical school in a primarily colonized system the inequities that Indigenous peoples faced were glaring. One being, Indigenous peoples need to be cared for by Indigenous physicians. Indigenous youth are disadvantaged from even thinking they could be Physicians. We have been made to feel inadequate, under-educated and unemployable by colonialism and generational trauma. And when we do get into Medical Schools our value and identity is questioned and we face racial micro-aggressions on the daily. This needs to stop. Indigenous youth are smart, proud, educated, compassionate and more than deserving to have every opportunity open to them.

I am passionate about inspiring other Indigenous youth to pursue careers in medicine and hope that one day I am not a minority in this profession.

I remind all levels of government about TRC Call to Action #23: "We call upon all levels of government to:

- i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.
- ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health- care professionals."

I will do my part to answer this call to action, will you?

Name	Gabrielle Fayant, She/Her
Age	34 years old
Community	Ottawa (Algonquin Territory)
Province	Ontario
Identity	Métis
Nation or land claim	Fishing Lake Métis Settlement
Organization	A7G and Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project (OIYPP)
Language	English

Submission:

I come from a long line of residential school, day school, convent, 60s scoop and millennial scoop survivors and a family that has been impacted by the MMIWG2S+ crisis. Our family was invited to live in Fishing Lake Métis Settlement in the 1930s after travelling and surviving for generations through colonial wars, the massacres of the buffalo, the Red River Resistance, the Battle of Batoche and living as Road Allowance people to name a few.

I found myself in Algonquin territory as a teen, very far from my family and struggled as a youth. Later in my 20s, I started a summer internship at AHF and began learning about residential schools and my families connection to them and similar institutions. Along with other Indigenous youth in Ottawa, we started a youth org called A7G. My purpose for starting A7G was so other Indigenous youth would not have to go through what I went through as a youth. In 2017, I was appointed as a special advisor to Minister Bennett and along with other youth, we wrote the A Roadmap to the Implementation of TRC 66. In my opinion, a vital recommendation for youth.

The work we did was mistreated and mishandled however the work started through ceremony and I stayed committed to the work. With A7G and other supporting orgs like the Caring Society and Children's Welfare League, we've written an additional 5+ reports supporting the need to implement TRC 66.

A7G not only does research in a meaningful way but we are most well known for our community and land-based work, from language revitalization, youth drop-ins, hide tanning, medicine picking, etc. I would love to showcase our grassroots work along with the need to implement TRC 66.

Name	KaLea First Rider, She/Her
Age	18 years old
Community	Stand Off Blood Reserve
Province	Alberta
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Blood Tribe
Organization	N/A
Language	Blackfoot

Submission:

I am currently graduating from Kainai High School. I am looking towards a career in the health field to look at the affects of residential school on my generation and how its influenced my generation parents choices that led them toward mental health challenges (ie addictions, family abandonment). In my high school endeavors I challenged myself to do the best that I can. I have tutored the younger students in Math and Science. One challenge I have overcome is dealing with my parents addictions and has lead me towards understanding our underlying causes. By sharing my generation story will help determine where we most need help in building a meaning relationship that is focused on truth and reconciliation. We need to help all first nations people from the youth to the at risk populations to the elders and by understanding the traumas each person holds will help us find solutions towards better mental health.

Name	Shawn Francis
Age	34 years old
Community	Edmundston
Province	New Brunswick
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Madawaska Maliseet First Nation
Organization	Madawaska Maliseet First Nation
Language	English

Submission:

To bring back culture and to make sure that it stays in the community for generations to come. The culture and traditions were lost and it means for some that they lost part of their identity as indigenous. Some indigenous people need to reconnect in order to heal from either trauma, abuse and drug abuse. It is important to reclaim what was lost or stolen and for our community it is hard since we have to travel in other communities to regain the knowledge in order to bring it back and teach the youth in order for the culture to stay and flourish. I myself have started the journey and learning the language so that I can understand the history and the culture. It is a passion of mine in which I will someday pass down or teach to people in my community. Truth and Reconciliation makes this easier if we all work as a team and we all benefit from this endeavour. Truth and Reconciliation needs to be done right.

Name	Stefan Richard Gislason, He/Him
Age	35 years old
Community	Winnipeg
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Sagkeeng First Nation
Organization	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
Language	English

Submission:

As a parent and a journalist, I watch as history rolls on and 2022 continues to move forward, Truth & Reconciliation is on the tip of everyone's minds and tongues. Some because they believe in it. Some because they have no more excuses to ignore what's been happening all across the country. Ground searches at former residential schools across Canada have unveiled more than 10,000 anomalies and counting. Before we can get to reconciling this notion known as reconciliation, we first must know the truth. So far, more than 10,000 children have been discovered and are on their journeys back to Creator. What this tells me is that there is so much more truth to uncover before we can really understand the idea of truth or reconciliation. But there is one thing that the children showing themselves to us is going to teach us so we can learn and grow together. Hope. The kind of hope that is not filled with wishes and grandeur but the type that is desperate and reaching for the last straw of desire that the truth can once again be the truth. Then once and for all, we can reconcile to the richest of our abilities.

As an intergenerational residential school survivor, that means to me that as the child & grandchild of those exposed to the residential school system has shaped me. Now that I am an adult with children of my own, these events that shaped me growing up are not the same as will shape them. The remnants of trauma are still there, but no longer will my generation have to worry about my children being taken from the front lawn or continuously moving from one side of the province to the other every few years to run from the Sixties Scoop like my Grandmother had. Instead, ours and future generations will wear orange proudly or openly discuss Land Back. Perhaps one day even reaching Land Back in a time that looks lofty today but may not be lofty tomorrow. It's a beautiful life that we've been given and it is up to us to greet the time with open eyes, open ears and an open mind. My heart and soul have been hurt by the history that hurt my family that lived in a different era but no longer will we have to run from the truth, we can begin to reconcile. The truth is showing itself to us and the truth will set us free.

Name	Adrian N. Gunner, He/Him/His
Age	26 years old
Community	Mistissini
Province	Quebec
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee
Organization	Cree Nation Youth Council
Language	English

Submission:

Truth and reconciliation. I often ask myself what that means, but this is my understanding. Truth: Choosing to expose the truth of systematic racism that still exists today and having the church release the documents from the residential school would be a start working towards the truth aspect.

Reconciliation: To reconcile with First Nations people in Canada, they must give them their lands back. Relationships need to revive from treaties that are not being respected or acknowledged. The land rights of First Nations people need to be recognized and respected by governments. Our cultures thrive on the land, and to have that reconciliation with our own cultures; we need the land back.

As Youth Grand Chief from the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee, I have a role in helping carry on the work that our leadership is trying to achieve and assume our responsibilities as future leaders of our nation. That work involves having discussions, support for land-based healing programs, and much more.

The mission of the Cree Nation Youth Council is "to facilitate the development of capability, leadership, and an appreciation of life in the Youth, in order to have a better future for our People and the Cree Nation."

Our vision is "To empower Youth by directly integrating and involving them at the Local and Regional levels of government, whether it be political or administrative. To thereby prudently prepare them to assume their responsibilities as the future leaders and builders of the Cree Nation"

To carry on the critical role of Youth in furthering Truth and Reconciliation is to continue working towards that. A work that is currently still new and in development, as this is the first anniversary of National Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Every nation is finding a way to heal its people in different paths. With other people, there are various healing paths to choose. Our people need healing. Our Residential School survivors need healing. Our victims of inter-generational trauma need healing. Healing must take place in

the works towards reconciliation. As Youth, we must find different healing methods and support them to continue the path forward.

Name	Symone Johnson, She/Her
Age	22 years old
Community	St. Albert
Province	Alberta
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Siksika Nation
Organization	Federal government
Language	English

Submission:

My personal interpretation of Truth and Reconciliation marks a monumental moment from which the federal government spearheads a pathway on becoming allies with Indigenous peoples. The Canadian government recognizes the significant impacts brought by the transfer of intergenerational trauma and hardships from past influences of colonization. Shedding light on Canadian history while maintaining an open dialogue is important to foster the first step in any relationship which is “Trust”. It is difficult to express the emotions I feel and the distraught that run through my veins on such treatment of human beings that were not seen as equal. To know and understand how everything on Earth is interconnected, but yet, Indigenous peoples were treated unfairly is mind boggling as you begin to think if you would treat yourself in that aspect. To expand my point further, you would not treat a cold like you would treat a cut on your hand. Therefore, why would you treat a human like you would treat a doormat; seeming worthless and depersonalized? Although I was not directly affected, I look down on my blood line and know that my family WAS from issues like spiritual disconnection, addictions, and mental health. Truth and Reconciliation to me represents a day of reflection for residential school Survivors, Sixties Scoop Survivors, missing and murdered Indigenous women, and those that have passed from these events. It is about beginning to preserve culture, languages, and Indigenous communities. Revitalizing these elements is essential to continuing individual identities and a special connection with others. We must also note that it’s important to begin consulting with Indigenous peoples as we all share the land, therefore, we must all co-exist peacefully and respectfully.

My current job allows me to make a positive impact for Indigenous colleagues. I have the opportunity to listen to stories and traditions from different Indigenous communities across Canada. To me, continuing to push Truth and Reconciliation is understanding the past, accepting it, and being able to bring forward ideas that will benefit Indigenous people in this present time that will have a long lasting impact. Recently, I attended a focus group that was intended to measure gaps on Indigenous experiences with my organization I work for. There was so much passionate ideas and energy that carried the conversation on what we need to improve that will enrich their experience. I have been working on projects such as revamping current initiatives the organization has that will help Indigenous students who enter the workforce feel a sense of belonging, support, and companionship. My vision in furthering Truth and Reconciliation is by spreading awareness with educational information, much like similar movements such as Black Lives Matter. When I hear someone speaking wrongfully of

Indigenous peoples with comments like we do not need a separate voice and “It was the past, get over it”, I step in and educate them on our Indigenous history, on our Indigenous culture, and on our story. We need to be allies and leaders educated on the Truth and Reconciliation Act and Action plans in order to step in and make a change. It all starts with one person to make an impact that can be activated onto others.

Thank you / Merci / Miigwec

Name	Nipawi Kakinoosit, He/They
Age	31 years old
Community	Victoria
Province	British Columbia
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Sucker Creek First Nation/Treaty 8
Organization	Island Health
Language	English

Submission:

Having led two delegations to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2021-2022, our biggest contribution was calling upon member states to create a Youth Advisory Council within the UNPFII. Currently, I am the first Indigenous Cultural Safety and Education Coordinator for Island Health, located on Vancouver Island. I am tasked with creating curriculum for Physicians/General and Nurse Practitioners for our Primary Care Networks and Urgent Primary Care Centres. The intention is to create better health outcomes for Indigenous Clients and to entrench Cultural Safety and Humility into their standards and practices.

Name	Jessica Lazare, She/Her
Age	29 years old
Community	Kahnawà:ke
Province	Quebec
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke
Organization	Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
Language	English

Submission:

Our youth are currently breaking cycles & creating more opportunities to grow and heal through our language and our culture.

As a youth, I've been a volunteer in different committees/boards/organizations within my community since 2015, and I am currently an elected Council Chief for the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. Much of my work involves advocacy for our Kanien'kehà:ka (Mohawk) rights & jurisdiction, as well as advocacy for youth voices in various leadership & community platforms.

To further truth and reconciliation, the role of youth is essential. They are currently recognizing the truth of our traumas, and the realizing that reconciliation within ourselves as Onkwehonwe (indigenous people) is a first step in the demand for meaningful recognition & acknowledgment from Canadian and the provincial governments. We need to support our youth on this journey, and we need to ensure that we are doing what we can to clear that path towards truth and reconciliation.

Name	Shelby Loft, They/Them/Theirs/One
Age	29 years old
Community	Kingston
Province	Ontario
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Tyendinaga, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte
Organization	N/A
Language	English

Submission:

Reconciliation for Who?: Recovering Canada’s Untold History of Indian Health Services

Many Canadians are starting to learn about Indigenous peoples horrific and unimaginable experiences in the Indian Residential Schools System (IRSS), among many other seemingly forgotten histories, such as the Sixties Scoop, the recent use of the Pass System, Sexual Sterilization Acts (passed in Alberta [1928-1972] and British Columbia [1933-1973]) and in this case, segregated healthcare. Indian Health Services (IHS) known more commonly as – Indian Hospitals and Sanatoriums – have, and continue to remain, largely invisible and/or forgotten, but mainly absent.

From the 1930’s until the late 1990’s, Churches and the Canadian Government worked in partnership to operate IHS, which determined how health-related services were delivered to First Nations and Inuit populations in Canada. Their partnership resulted in sixty-one Sanatoriums and twenty-one Indian Hospitals spanning Canada. These systems were intended to remove First Nations and Inuit children from their homes. Indian Hospitals and Sanatoriums were created to segregate Indigenous people from Canadians, as well as to use Indigenous people’s bodies – as bodies, or rather, objects of experimentation, such as vaccination trials and other forms of technological advancement. These continued absences in predominant narratives in Canadian history further pathologizes Indigenous people as sick and in-need.

For example, in 1933, Dr. R. G. Ferguson, the Director of Fort Qu’Appelle Sanatorium in Saskatchewan, began the first vaccination trials for the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccine in Canada. Infants who were born in the Qu’Appelle Indian Health Unit were the test subjects, and by 1938, the results from his study on the First Nations and Inuit populations demonstrated the effectiveness of the vaccine, and only afterwards, then provided to Canadians. The last Government owned Indian Hospital closed in 1996 at Fort Qu’Appelle Saskatchewan – the same Province, and year, as the last IRSS closure, yet too many preventable deaths continue to occur.

Paying attention to IRSS is important; and is necessary and long overdue. Despite the notion that these events have occurred ‘in the past’, it is paramount to note that as of April 28, 2019, forced and coerced sterilization among Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples are only recently surfacing as part of Canadian history. History(ies) which continues to remain

absent, forgotten, erased, and/or not part of the national dialogues regarding Truth and Reconciliation.

Medical technologies have advanced and progressed by using the bodies of racialized peoples, yet these atrocities remain simultaneously absent, forgotten, and/or become intentionally forgettable, and continues to result in a lack of actionable outcomes. It is not unlike the status quo to ignore these injustices; which, I trace in my doctoral work that stems from my family's stories and experiences during IHS. However, what I find particularly baffling, is the continued desire for normalcy. Each day, every day, Canadians more broadly, continue to actively ignore, forget, and remain unwilling and/or unmotivated to change/identify how their (in)actions contribute to this present-day genocide.

Across Canada, reconciliation and 'healing' are part of many national dialogues. Canadians are working to feel better about their Ancestor's legacies, which can and often involves Indigenous peoples to relive their trauma, as if it were a service to the population writ-large to care. The cost of reliving trauma is too expensive and continues this harm-inducing practice as contemporary forms of ongoing colonialism.

Truth and Reconciliation are necessary for Indigenous people and Canadians to work towards a better future together. Everyone should be a part of these conversations. But for too many reasons (in-part, described above), Indigenous people continue to experience the upmost expense, but for who?

Name	Meagan Malcolm, She/They
Age	24 years old
Community	Winnipeg
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation
Organization	Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba
Language	English

Submission:

My name is Meagan. I am an Anishinaabekwe from Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation. I am student leader, activist, and a community-based researcher. I was the first Indigenous woman to be elected president of University of Winnipeg Students' Association, where I advocated on behalf of post secondary at municipal, provincial and federally. I'm currently leading a research project on Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), where I hope to get it implemented as a private bill in Manitoba. I was invited delegate to the United Nations Status of Women, where I had the opportunity to meet with world leaders on gender equality. I am currently a M.A student at Lakehead University, pursuing a Masters of Arts in Social Justices. My area of research will focus on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, I plan to continue to utilize my educational background to education the public on the history of Indigenous peoples.

Name	Jama Maxie, He/Him
Age	26 years old
Community	Ontario
Province	Toronto
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Whitebear First Nations
Organization	Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
Language	English

Submission:

My name is Jama Maxie. I am biracial afro-Indigenous identity. I am from White Bear first nations by Regina Saskatchewan. My family and I relocated shortly after my birth and moved to Toronto. Upon arriving in Toronto, my siblings and I were separated in the foster care system that continued the intergeneration trauma that left my grandma in residential schooling. I spent from the time I was 9 months old to 18 years old as crown ward. I begin to feel indifferent and get into trouble in school with eventually led to me becoming an alcoholic and drug addict. After my hardships, I had enough and reclaimed my identity by becoming a warrior. I "broke the cycle" on September 4th, 2018 and got clean and sober. At this time I started to pursue education and enrolled in college with something to prove. In April 2020 I graduated with academic honours in the social service work program at Georgian College and even received the exemplary learner award upon graduation. Later on, I received the Indigenous Spirit Fund Award in 2021 for my outstanding efforts in breaking down barriers while achieving my full potential. I now attend York University for my bachelor's degree in psychology. My goal is to be accepted into the University of British Columbia to pursue a master's in clinical psychology so he can work with indigenous communities struggling with mental health and addiction.

I take pride in my journey and believe in what is called narrative therapy, where I get to share my life story with people, to show that you to can become a warrior. I have been a guest speaker on multiple occasions at different conferences for organizations such as Chiefs of Ontario, Association of Native Child and Family Services of Ontario, and Hiawatha First Nation. As far as I know I am the first person to be foster child with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto since the organization opened in 2004 to now becoming a worker for the organization. I work as drop in youth worker at the Native Youth Resource Centre where my role is to best support the youth in their journey by using the resources here and in in the community.

Name	Martini Monkman, She/Her
Age	28
Community	Winnipeg
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation
Organization	N/A
Language	English

Submission:

For me truth and reconciliation means being honest and truthful .. acknowledging what had happened in history and not sugarcoating it. Atrocies and crimes against humanity have happened to our indigenous people and we must remember this history always. We must remember those we have lost their lives and remain being their voices for those who can't speak for themselves such as babies and children. Reconciliation to me means existing in this world together peacefully. Not with all this systemic racism that exists here in Canada. Our laws and policies need to change for Reconciliation to be possible. It's not going to happen overnight but I believe it still is possible to work towards that goal. We need to educate our young people. We need to support young parents. We need to be inclusive for those with children of their own. These children are the future and deserve a Seat at the table. We need to keep inspiring our young leaders and make space for them to be activists and how to use their voice. We are the future. We deserve to be apart of it.

Name	Brandon Tehsenrehtanion Montour, He/Him
Age	25 years old
Community	Kahnawake
Province	Quebec
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Kanien'kehá:ka Nation (Kahnawake)
Organization	Mohawk Council of Kahnawake
Language	English

Submission:

My name is Brandon Tehsenrehtanion Montour and I am Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) from Kahnawake.

I am a first-generation post-secondary student in my third year at McGill University Faculty of Law pursuing a Bachelor of Civil Law and Juris Doctor. In 2020, I graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) with Great Distinction.

As an Indigenous youth living on reserve, I experience the challenges that we face as a Mohawk community firsthand. Such challenges relate to self-government, child welfare, justice, intergenerational trauma, substance abuse, and more. These issues inspired me to be the first in my family to pursue higher education and be a leader within my community to bring about the change that I wanted to see. As such, I embarked on a long educational journey to equip myself with the knowledge and tools to bring back to my community and advance reconciliation.

Within my community, I volunteer and am involved with numerous different organizations that seek to empower Kahnawake and our people. I am presently on the Board of Directors of Kahnawake Shakotia'takehnhas Community Services, an organization that offers support programs such as Youth Protection, Addiction Response, Support Counselling, Violence Prevention, Assisted Living Services and more. In 2019, I was appointed by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake to serve as Chairperson of the Kahnawake Cannabis Control Board, a regulatory board for the purpose of regulating and enforcing Kahnawake's independently enacted cannabis law.

At McGill, I am currently the President of the Indigenous Law Association, an association of law students who come together and advocate for greater awareness of Indigenous legal traditions at the Faculty of Law. In addition, I am an Executive Editor of Rooted, an Indigenous law publication that aims to showcase academic articles, editorial pieces, poetry, art, and other forms of content generated on topics of Indigenous law. Our goal is to revitalize knowledge of the various Indigenous legal traditions across Turtle Island and to make this an important aspect of the reconciliation process.

In the summer of 2020, I worked as a law intern at McCarthy Tétrault in Toronto. As a student, I assisted the firm implement its Reconciliation Action Plan to address the role that the firm should be taking with respect to truth and reconciliation. In addition, I had the privilege of assisting the firm represent First Nations clients who brought a national class action against the Attorney General of Canada for failing to address prolonged drinking-water advisories on reserves across Canada. In the end, we were successful, and the Government of Canada agreed to settle this action for approximately \$8 billion.

Upon earning my law degree from McGill, I hope to combine my passion for politics, Indigenous law, and justice in order to advocate for all Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. I hope to further truth and reconciliation by continuing to advocate for a greater role of Indigenous law in the Canadian legal system, through continues dialogue and trust.

I hope to share my experiences and passion for truth and reconciliation, as well as insight from my community, with you further.

Name	Shelby Provost, She/They
Age	23 years old
Community	Piiknani Nation
Province	Alberta
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Piiknani Nation/Treaty 7
Organization	Rise up (ANFCA), Indigenous youth council (NAFC), Napi Friendship Association
Language	English

Submission:

Truth and reconciliation to me is, to acknowledge the hurt and wrongdoings that had happened in the past, and a safe way to express and apologize.

I first heard about the TRC and 94 Calls to Action, with the Rise up you group. I personally have hosted a information session, to youth on my reserve. I hope to gain a better and bigger understanding of the TRC, and host more information sessions and help other youth gain knowledge, because in my opinion this is a topic worth hearing about.

Name	Mélanie Savard
Age	35 years old
Community	Wendake
Province	Quebec
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Huronne-Wendat
Organization	Founder, Yänonhchia' Art et Culture, Vice-president, Musique Nature (OBNL)
Language	French

Submission:

Kwe aweti'

Mélanie Yändia' wich wendat yati'. My name is Mélanie. I am a member of the turtle clan and a Wendat of the Huron-Wendat Nation. I am 35 years old. I grew up in a family of craftspeople, but my childhood was hard. My suffering drove me to take refuge in alcohol to numb the violence in my heart, my body, my identity. After giving birth to my son at age 19, I trained in social work so I could help my community, the First Nations, before going to university to study social science. I spent a decade as a social worker with First Nations, primarily working with families and their children. Childhood is the most important determinant to focus on in order to support their psychosocial development, which is so vital to their identity. In December 2021, I decided to personally innovate in the art of Indigenous intervention. Respecting the principle of “by and for,” but also seeking reconciliation between nations. The first symbolic National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was a profoundly meaningful day for my thoughts and what I hoped to accomplish. Ever since then, I have been inviting people from all walks of life to come meet us and learn how beautiful and rich our traditional knowledge is. To create environments where education, awareness, listening, openness and love are vectors of change that will help us finally learn how to get to know each other better and nurture an individual and societal sense of welcoming, equality, inclusion and remembrance. I visit all kinds of educational institutions, community organizations and communities to create meeting places where women can gather to share. I love saying: Today, I am going to tell you a bit about me, or rather a bit about us, because although Indigenous people have 10,000 years of history behind us, we too have a 400-year history of cohabitation, marriage and births. We have voices, and we need to step out of the shadows and take our place with confidence, dignity and pride. We need to reach out like our ancestors did, in order to genuinely achieve the healthy, sincere nation-to-nation reconciliation we have been waiting for for so long and to leave the next seven generations a world where I hope systemic racism, violence, intergenerational trauma and invisibility will have given way to pride, unity, equality, human development, diversity, inclusion and identity-based pride.

Tiawenhk for the actions you are taking to spotlight our voices, our rights, our engagement and our hopes.

Onenh!

Mélanie Savard
Yändia' wich
Wendat endi

Name	Tyrone Sock
Age	29 years old
Community	Fredericton
Province	New Brunswick
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Elsipogtog
Organization	Mawiw Council Inc.
Language	English

Submission:

I am Tyrone Sock, a proud Mi'kmaq of Elsipogtog First Nation. My story starts at my foundation, my family, friends, and community. With their love, support, and guidance, I feel we can overcome anything. At 29 years old I walk with the scars of a lifetime of living. From suicides to terrible accidents, many ups and downs, doubts, and certainties, my scars have this ability to remind me my past was real, and what is real offers knowledge, understanding and the ultimate forgiveness.

From an early age, I developed a passion for hockey. My father was the assistant coach for many years during minor hockey and was loved by every player and parent that we crossed paths with. Hockey created a community for us and friendships that will last a lifetime. Our love for the game and brotherhood made us into a championship team for many years. This was a great life lesson for all of us part of that team and helped all of us as individuals get to the next level not only hockey but in life. I went on to play Major Junior Hockey for the Saint John Sea Dogs and became a role model for our community. When you work hard and have fun, anything is possible.

I have been fishing lobster and snow crab alongside my father for 10 years. It has been 15 months since our fishing vessel, Tyhawk, capsized 10 miles off the coast of Cape Breton. We lost my father that day and has since shifted the way I look at life. The creator had other plans for me.

A man who did everything for his family, friends, and community. Gone in an instant. I will forever be grateful for the teachings and lessons my father taught me during his short 49 years here. I will continue to implement these teachings into my everyday life. Watching someone lead by example is way more powerful and inspiring than being told what to do.

In the journey of education, there is no destination. I figured this out the hard way. For several years I thought I had it figured out and did not want anything new in my life. But I did not realize the moment to settle down in one place then you stop growing. The great Creator has a plan for every single one of us. The moment we get off track creator will slap you in the face with a new set of teachings to put you back on course. For myself, it was losing my father in a very tragic fishing accident. A boat I was supposed to be on, the creator chose another path for me.

I spent many days wondering about the what ifs. This was only bringing me into a darker place. I soon realized something needed to be changed. I enrolled in school at UNB and began taking part in sweat lodge ceremonies in the summer of 2021. This helped me release any negative energy I was holding on to and helped open my mind and heart up. It was hearing the stories and struggles from other community members when I realized I was not alone.

My goal as an educator will be to help students unlock the sacred knowledge already living inside them. To open them up to the endless number of connections we have living around us. Rather than chasing things like fame, wealth, and status, I want my students to spend time creating- good words, good feelings, good relationships, and good memories. A teacher is not meant to be a mediator between you and the creator. Only meant to help open your access to the divine wisdom already living within. When you are connected to your inner teacher, everyone becomes a teacher, and everything becomes a lesson.

As a father of 2 young children, I am beginning to see we are all sent by Creator to be teachers for one another with our own unique gifts. These gifts are much more powerful if we use them collaboratively towards helping the community as a whole. The indigenous way of life has always been communal. The goal of living this way is to provide needs of the entire group rather than the desires of individuals. In tribal traditions, cooperation is highly valued. Everyone has a skill/role to share, and no skill is better than another.

Name	Dysin Spence, He/Him
Age	20 years old
Community	Peguis First Nation
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Peguis Band
Organization	Peguis Child & Family Services (PCFS)
Language	English

Submission:

Hello,

My name is Dysin Spence.

I am first nations from peguis first nation.

I want to share my story and become a voice for our younger people.

I was involved in the cfs and justice system

I overcame alot of adversity.

I graduated grade 12 and attended university for criminal law

I am an example of overcoming the system.

Name	Stephanie Spence, She/Her/They
Age	31 years old
Community	Brandon
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	York Factory First Nation - not an official band member. My family has been working tirelessly to prove our status. Am otherwise Metis.
Organization	Brandon University, Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health, BU CARES Research Centre – Rural and Indigenous Community Based Research
Language	English

Submission:

To this day, colonialism and racism impact the way Indigenous people experience mental health. During my time as a student at Brandon University, I have also been working as a research assistant. My work revolves around the Indigenization of our collective agreement, anti-racism, and most importantly, connection to culture by creating a safe space for Indigenous people to provide and receive traditional teachings on the land through collaboration with Indigenous community partners while concentrating on the sacred elements of the medicine wheel. For this project, we are literally inventing the wheel as we go, as there are very few examples of how to do research in a non-colonial way. As an Indigenous woman who has been able to feel the impact of these workshops in my soul, I am confident that this is the way to further truth and reconciliation, as evident in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).

Finally, I am a student member of the Indigenous Education Senate Sub-Committee, where it is my goal to see that the barriers Indigenous students face (trauma, learning about the harms and tragedies done to us and our ancestors, having to learn healthier coping mechanisms, filling the gap in our education) will no longer be something that gets in the way of obtaining a degree, especially within competitive fields that focus on GPA's.

Name	Diandre Thomas-Hart, She/Her
Age	26 years old
Community	Winnipeg
Province	Manitoba
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Peguis First Nation
Organization	Southern Chiefs' Organization Youth Council
Language	Cree

Submission:

Tansi, Boozhoo, Aaniin, Hello,

Awena Kina, nitishnakason Oshkinekisikweo Kawechikapaystawat Mikisewak, Win Nippe nidoonji.

My name is Diandre Thomas-Hart; My spirit name is Young Woman who Stands Among the Eagles, and I am from the Crane Clan. I am treaty status to Peguis First Nation in Treaty One Territory, although I grew up urban in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In 2021 I was elected as the Southern Chiefs' Organization Youth Chief for Council representing the youth voice for the 34 southern First Nations in Manitoba. Our Council is unique in a way that we have two representatives from each region we serve, and most importantly, a vote at the Chiefs in Summit table. We help pass resolutions and ensure the youth are heard, reflected, and actively involved in our work at SCO. My specific roles as Youth Chief relate to Health Transformation, Youth Engagement and Programming, and advocacy.

There is a lot of work to do in youth engagement when it comes to Truth and Reconciliation. To invest in our young people, ensuring they are at every table where decisions that will affect our next seven generations, past and present, are being discussed and implemented. Young people are leaders in their own right; being able to listen to our knowledge as young people is vital to moving forward in anything related to our future families and communities. We must create these opportunities where youth can be respected and involved in these opportunities to ensure health and wellness, language, traditional knowledge, and cultural reclamation in all areas can be brought forward and this learning passed down to the generations to come.

The work of leadership requires humility and courage. I work to empower young people in their own leadership abilities and my passion is to create opportunities for youth to discover their gifts and build confidence in their knowledge. The work of truth requires accountability, to admit the historical wrong doings that still affect our Indigenous communities today and share that truth with others. The work of reconciliation focuses on action, to actively work together to achieve balance in restoring relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within Canada.

I am appreciative of the work already being done across Canada regarding the advancement of Truth and Reconciliation, but we must continue this work forever. From as long as colonization on Turtle Island began, we must continue shifting our ways of thinking to becoming a more just, equitable, and inclusive society. We must learn to forgive, but importantly we must continue learning how to live together in peace and cooperation as outlined in our original Indigenous governing models.

Ekosi, Miigwetch and thank you to the Youth Voices of Indigenous Leaders 2022 on this opportunity to share and hear important youth voices.

In kindest regards,

Diandre Thomas-Hart

Southern Chiefs' Organization Youth Chief

On behalf of the young people from the Southern 34 First Nations in Manitoba from the Southern Chiefs' Organization Youth Council.

Name	Malia Tremblay, She/Her
Age	N/A
Community	Ottawa
Province	Ontario
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Cree
Organization	N/A
Language	French

Submission:

For me, truth and reconciliation is not about forgetting the past; it is rather about shining a light on the reality of our people to better change the way forward.

As a first-generation post-secondary student, I have learned quite a bit on Human Rights while studying at the University of Ottawa. I have especially learned the importance of our presence in spaces that were initially not meant for us, to use my voice to share our traditional knowledge with my colleagues and to put emphasis on the importance of Indigenous rights and Human Rights.

As part of my work at Indigenous Affairs, I'm able to allocate funding to our communities on an ongoing basis in order to advance Indigenous issues and scientific research while also improving ties between the federal government and members of our communities. I believe in being an advocate for change within the public sector.

At the community level, by participating in a number of local initiatives, including a non-profit organization for Indigenous youth, a march for hope, peaceful protests, drum circles, and the creation of fact sheets, I have been able to promote the cause of Indigenous women and the survivors of the Sixties Scoop and residential schools. Thanks to these opportunities and the power of knowledge sharing, I am giving a voice to those who are no longer with us.

Name	Gino Pierre Wapistan
Age	31 years old
Community	Nutashkuan
Province	Quebec
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Innu
Organization	Services sociaux Nutashkuan
Language	Nutashkuan

Submission:

I am responsible for front-line services in Nutashkuan. I took a one-year sabbatical to go back to school for an AEC [Quebec attestation of college studies] in social work in an Indigenous context. There is a lot to say on that topic—on interventions and cultural safety, the Indigenous language, and DPJ [Quebec youth protection branch] involvement in Indigenous families.

Name	Emily Wright, She/Her
Age	29 years old
Community	Toronto
Province	Ontario
Identity	First Nations
Nation or land claim	Wasauksing First Nation
Organization	City of Toronto – Indigenous Affairs Office
Language	English

Submission:

I work as an Indigenous Youth Research Associate within the Public Consultation Unit within the City of Toronto. My primary focus is on the Duty to Consult with traditional and territorial partners and my secondary focus is the urban Indigenous population of Toronto. Strengthening our engagement strategies with Indigenous peoples and giving them a voice is what I believe to be a step towards Truth and Reconciliation. It's not easy being Indigenous and working for the government but I am doing the good work!