



## Background

The concept of “Truth and Reconciliation” between Indigenous people and Canada emerged through the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. The Settlement Agreement includes five different elements to address the legacy of Indian Residential Schools:

- a Common Experience Payment (CEP) for all eligible former students of Indian Residential Schools
- an Independent Assessment Process (IAP) for claims of sexual or serious physical abuse
- measures to support healing such as the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program and an endowment to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF). *It is important to note that the AHF was defunded prior to the conclusion of the TRC in 2014.*
- commemorative activities
- the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Bringing closure to the legacy of Indian residential schools lies at the heart of reconciliation and a renewal of the relationships between Indigenous people who attended these schools, their families and communities, and all Canadians.

The final report of the TRC summarized the tragic experiences of approximately 150,000 Canadian residential school students. Many of these children were sexually abused. Approximately 3,200 died of malnourishment, tuberculosis and other diseases caused by poor living conditions. Justice Murray Sinclair argued that many more students died but were not officially counted.

The Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement concluded with a final report and the TRC 94 Calls to Action. In the context of the Take a Hike Foundation there are

- two calls to action directly related to the equitable education of children,
- one call to action for youth,
- and two calls to action for education.

In addition, there are two calls to action that could strengthen Indigenous identity, one call to action for language and culture, and one call to action for health. Because of this, Take a Hike recognizes that, although there may be a focus on the calls to action for education, education does not operate in isolation in the lives of Indigenous people. Indigenous people do not live single issue lives.



## Take a Hike Foundation Endorsement of Reconciliation

At Take a Hike a Foundation we endorse the Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and the calls to justice from the Final Report on the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWGs) and will work to integrate the spirit of BC's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

We know that Indigenous people, whether they are First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, have suffered extreme physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental abuse through legislated discrimination such as Indian Residential Schools, the 60s Scoop, and the ongoing genocide of Indigenous people such as Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people going missing or being murdered.

We are saying, we believe you and we are committed as an organization to continue to work towards social justice in solidarity with all Indigenous people and will take the lead from Indigenous communities as we move through this work.

## Our Mission Statement Operates in Alignment with Reconciliation

### MISSION STATEMENT

Take a Hike empowers vulnerable youth with the skills and resilience they need to graduate high school, build healthy relationships, navigate the challenges of young adulthood, and achieve success – however they define it

## Our Strategic Vision Operates in Alignment with Reconciliation

### VISION STATEMENT

All youth believe in their potential and are on their path to success.

### VALUES THAT SUPPORT OUR WORK ON RECONCILIATION

Nature and time spent outside are crucial in the success of Take a Hike. Spending time in the outdoors, engaged in fun and challenging adventures, provides youth with the opportunity to develop resilience and self-awareness that help them navigate the challenges of life and achieve their goals.

We Integrate the Following Values in All of Our Work

- **Well-being:** Mental health, and physical and emotional well-being.
- **Relationship:** Connection and belonging.
- **Exploration:** Challenge and adventure.



- **Growth:** Fulfilling potential.
- **Gratitude:** In service to the community, and community engagement.

## Indigenous People Leading Reconciliation

We believe in Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth are capable and motivated individuals, each with their own background and life experience. The Take a Hike program responds to their personal needs to help them succeed in school and in life...however they define their success. The motivation is, how do we support Indigenous youth to grow into leaders of their own visions of reconciliation?

## Reconciliation as a Foundation for Our Cultural Safety and Humility Policy

Our endorsement for reconciliation with Indigenous people provides the foundation for our cultural safety and humility policy, where our evidence-based approach is used to also measure our progress on materializing reconciliation with Indigenous people.

## Key Priorities for Reconciliation

- 1. Ensure a welcoming and safe culture for Indigenous People.**
  - a. Revise Human Resources policies and procedures.
  - b. Recruit at least one Indigenous member of the Senior Leadership Team and one Indigenous Board Member.
  - c. Provide Reconciliation & Indigenous Cultural Safety Training to all existing and new staff members.
- 2. Develop ways to better serve Indigenous youth.**
  - a. Modify the Take a Hike Program Model and Theory of Change to reflect First Peoples' Principles of Learning and Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
  - b. Explore culturally appropriate ways to reach more Indigenous youth.
  - c. Develop relationships with Nations where TAH works.
- 3. Actively seek Indigenous suppliers, sub-contractors, and partners.**
  - a. Identify Indigenous-led businesses and Indigenous individuals in our communities.
  - b. Create opportunities to partner with Nations and Bands.



## Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action

While we endorse all of the TRC's Calls to Action, we recognize that those listed below are especially significant to TAH's work:

### **EDUCATION**

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.
7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:
  - i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
  - ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
  - iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
  - iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
  - v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
  - vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
  - vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.



12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

### **EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION**

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.



**TAKE A HIKE**  
FOUNDATION

## Endorsement of Reconciliation

**March 2021**

### **YOUTH PROGRAMS**

66. We call upon the federal government to establish multiyear funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

### **Next Steps**

Take a Hike Foundation's Endorsement of Reconciliation is the first step in Take a Hike's learning and journey in this work. This endorsement acts as one piece of Take a Hike's journey and we plan to continue supplementing this learning as we move forward. We acknowledge there is more work to be done and intend this endorsement to solidify our commitment to this work as we move forward.